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# GOLD OF OPHIR

or

## *The Lure That Made America*

BY

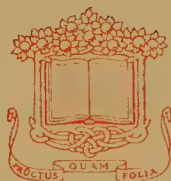
SYDNEY GREENBIE

AUTHOR OF "JAPAN, REAL AND IMAGINARY,"  
"THE PACIFIC TRIANGLE," ETC.

AND

MARJORIE GREENBIE

AUTHOR OF "IN THE EYES OF THE EAST"



GARDEN CITY NEW YORK  
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FIRST EDITION

To  
SUMNER AND SOPHIE CROSBY



But where shall wisdom be found?  
And where is the place of understanding?  
Man knoweth not the price thereof;  
Neither is it found in the land of the living.  
The depth saith, It is not in me;  
And the sea saith, It is not with me.  
It cannot be gotten for gold,  
Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.  
It cannot be valued with the *gold of Ophir*, . . .  
Whence then cometh wisdom?

JOB, XXVIII, 12-20.



This is a book of historical importance in the study of American development, revealing, for the first time, the astounding fact that it was the wealth of the Indies (China) that lured America round the Horn, and across the continent in covered wagons and gave the initial impetus to the growth of this nation. A romantic and fascinating story of American life; our Beowulf and our Niebelungenlied, which lays hold of the roots of our imagination with the primitive power of myth.



## PREFACE

**T**HIS book is the fruit of our own effort to supply written and contemporary documentation for a section of American history which we ourselves came to know chiefly through oral tradition in the Far East and on the Atlantic seaboard. It is the first popular account of the great and far-reaching effect that the lure of the wealth of the Far East has had in building up the American nation; in stimulating its westward expansion, and determining its foreign policy. It includes much that is already familiar to lovers of the great traditions of the sea—the exploits of our early merchant marine, of the whalers, the story of the clippers and the California gold rush. But it includes also a reinterpretation of many familiar facts in our history that have, seemingly, nothing to do with the Orient, and will, we trust, furnish a reliable basis for forming an opinion about the many problems now disturbing us in the Pacific.

For the particular period we deal with, between the Revolution and the Civil War, serves but to remind us of the dominating influence of the wealth of the Far East on the whole discovery, exploration, and development of this continent. From the day that the Turks captured Constantinople and cut off the land routes to the East, the wealth of the Orient became the lodestone to westward migration. Our land has been criss-crossed by young men grown old trying to beat out an easy road to the Orient. Spanish, English, Dutch, and French, the first explorers in America, were all bound on one quest. Columbus bore in his hands a letter to the great Khan of Cathay. When John Cabot, an Italian by birth, left Bristol in 1497, he went westward with the determination to find “the island of Zipango (Japan) and the lands from which Oriental caravans brought their goods to Alexandria.” Captain John Smith was commissioned to sail up the Chickahominy and find

a passage to China. Hendrik Hudson's ship, the *Half Moon*, was fitted out by the Dutch East India Company "to seek westward the passage through to China," and ran aground off Albany trying to nose its way into the port of Canton by way of the Hudson River. La Salle, sixty years after Hudson, at the age of twenty-six, disposed of the land grant given him eight miles above Montreal in order to discover and explore a water route through to the Pacific. The last word he said as he plunged into the wilderness up the St. Lawrence was "China," and the spot still retains the name *La Chine*.

When the United States became a nation and began to take all these rival claims to itself, beyond the enigma of the Western wilderness persisted always the lure of those Eastern seas. John Ledyard, the Connecticut Yankee, was ready to "endure poverty and nakedness even unto the utmost extremity of human suffering" in the hope of blazing a trail across this continent so that the furs of the Northwest might be sold profitably in China. Thomas Jefferson conceived the Embargo with the latent hope that it would coöperate with his other plans to drive us overland toward the Pacific. He had encouraged Ledyard and later sent Lewis and Clark to open the way to China. The Oregon question arose because we did not want Great Britain to share with us a port in the midst of the great fur fields on the Pacific and thus compete with us in China. Before the Covered Wagon, or Prairie Schooner, and the Clipper Ships which pierced and encircled this continent was the aureate sheen of the East, and a host of able men who saw our destiny clearly were captivated by the prospect. For thirty years Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri stirred Congress with this glitter of the Indies, and to-day his statue stands in the park of St. Louis, facing and pointing west. Beneath his feet is this inscription:

THERE IS THE EAST.  
THERE IS THE ROAD TO INDIA.

Had it not been for this magnetic attraction of the East working in the American mind at a time when American ships were the swiftest on the highways of Oriental commerce and the

China merchant the "Captain of Industry," our people might well have been content with less than the full span of the continent. They continued that implacable march across river, prairie, and mountain barrier because there was always before them a goal supremely worth marching to. When finally the Golden Gate of San Francisco opened to us the treasure house of the East, the quest was ended and the continent was peopled from sea to sea.

Hence, at this time, when everyone is appraising anew our relations with the world, when editors and publicists, unfamiliar with China's place in America, still gaze toward Europe while declaiming on America's place in the world—at this time, when the prospects of the most stupendous conflicts may be locked in the penetralia of the Far East, it is well to look back across our own development and estimate what we owe to China and that constant sight on our horizon of the immemorial oasis of the wealth of the world. Great as was its imaginative appeal, it constantly justified itself in tangible results. In consequence, the trade with the Orient is one of the two great economic facts in the history of the United States between the Revolution and the Civil War, the other fact being the development and westward extension of negro slavery. This trade not only set the Atlantic coast states on their feet after the Revolution: it furnished capital which gave them their initial industrial impetus. It may not have been very great; but it takes only a little to prime a cold engine. And mainly, it was responsible for our ultimately securing the whole Pacific seaboard from Mexico to Canada. Poor as the colonies were, with an inadequate agricultural hinterland and only dense forests to back them, had not Boston, Salem, Nantucket, New Bedford, New York, and Philadelphia found a profitable trade in Canton, Calcutta, Hawaii, and the whaling fields of Japan, the plight of the new nation would have been a very desperate one indeed. Instead, these seaport villages through their maritime enterprise in the Pacific enjoyed an affluence and a stir in the world which make one of the most spirited stories in American history. Their ventures by sea tided the nation

over that difficult period when it was engaged in taking effective possession of its magnificent heritage of land.

Implicit as these facts are in all written history and patent in contemporary records, they have never received their due in general and popular chronicles of the United States. Their purely maritime aspects have again and again been emphasized in accounts of the merchant marine. Popular writers of sea stories and literary purveyors to local pride rediscover the East Indian history of Salem with perennial enthusiasm. But in such books, the larger social and political significance is lost in the general bravissimo. When the wider implications of the trade are adequately treated, it is usually in histories of special phases of American development as in "Sea Power in American History," by Krafft and Norris; "History of American Diplomacy," by John Bassett Moore; or in certain recent and highly specialized accounts of the commercial relations of the United States with China, like Tyler Dennett's "Americans in Eastern Asia."

Ever since the advent of Marxian socialism in 1848, with its economic interpretation of history, historians have boldly declared that history is not a study of wars and statesmen, but of the people. Yet aside from a few details about how the women dressed and what the farmers ate, we are still furnished essentially with studies of laws, congresses, statesmen, and documents. But we believe that history is not only a study of how the people are governed, but of the infinitesimal influences that have gone into the making of the things by which they live. In the last analysis, the development of national life is to be traced to the way in which individual households solved their economic and social problems, and worked outward in the community. Small things may affect great nations. The introduction of chairs has, by lifting the Japanese soldiers off their legs, on which they had always sat, increased their height, and so augmented the military power of Japan as an empire.

While we are bounded on the west by the Pacific Ocean, the scholarly consciousness of America has been an island sur-

rounded on all sides by the Atlantic. This has considerably curtailed the popular understanding of our whole historical development, as we shall try to show in the book.

I first discovered this inadequacy of material when giving a course of lectures for the University of Chicago some two or three years ago on "The Place of the Pacific in the New World Consciousness." Not only did I find myself handicapped as to sources, but many of our accepted notions about American history did not agree with observations I had actually made in the field. Furthermore, I found my audiences utterly unprepared for any material about the Far East ante-dating Secretary Hay's pronouncement in 1898 about the Open Door in China. It was to supply this need that I set myself the task of working out this history.

The overweening devotion of our scholars to the Atlantic has also prevented us from taking full possession of our own peculiar heritage of folklore and epic story. For more than half a century we have remained ignorant of the epic of one section of this Pacific enterprise—"Moby Dick"—the most vigorous and original narrative of the 19th Century in English, the only American work which, in sweep of poetic imagination, is worthy of the magnitude of our national ambition and the grandeur of our domain. Yet with Moby Dick was lost a whole gallery of heroic and picturesque figures—men whose letter-books and diaries, still preserved in manuscript amidst bills of lading and ledgers, speak through the jazz and uproar of modern life with a voice mellow and wise, with the garnered wisdom of Odysseus.

"The China clipper," says Samuel Eliot Morison, who in his delightful "Maritime History of Massachusetts" tells some of this story, "was our Rheims and our Parthenon." The China trade, with all its associated pursuits of exploration and whalery, is our Beowulf and our Niebelungenlied: its adventures and encounters are full of stories which reach down below the intelligence and moral judgment and lay hold of the roots of our imagination with the primitive power of myth.

It is a proof of the vitality of this old experience that, despite

the amnesia that overtook the nation after the Civil War, despite the comparative silence of the written word, so much of it should survive in oral tradition.

Provincetown, Mass.

SYDNEY GREENBIE.

May 24, 1925.

MARJORIE GREENBIE.

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GOLD OF OPHIR  
OR  
*The Lure That Made America*



# GOLD OF OPHIR

## PROLOGUE

### SOME SHARDS OF STRANGE POTTERY

THE motorist upon the mountain highways of New England and Pennsylvania and even in inland villages in New York State will often observe, in farmhouses and junk shops, certain strange and beautiful objects which find no explanation in the history he has learned from the school books. A vase of Chinese cloisonné converted into a kerosene lamp burns nightly in a cottage under the lea of Candlewood Mountain in the Berkshires—a memorial, amidst surroundings otherwise humble and indigenous, of foreign splendours whose passing has never dimmed its glow. Where did it come from? Few stop to inquire. With wick and chimney from the village store it now serves a necessary domestic purpose, and those who eat their fried potatoes and blackberry jelly around it every night ask no more.

Sometimes the evidence of this exotic affluence is on a larger scale. Driving through the little town of Litchfield, Connecticut, perched upon a hill, you ask about a handsome white house on the green. It was built, you learn, at the end of the 18th Century. "But," you remark, "where did men get money to build and maintain houses like these in the midst of an infertile farming region?"

"They got it in the China trade," replies the historian of the town, and amplifies his statement with details about "Square" Deming, who invested the earnings of his country store in a cargo of "pillar dollars" shipped from New York to China. His enterprise flourished till Jefferson's embargo put an end to it.

As one approaches the Atlantic coast, the curios grow more numerous and the tradition more detailed. Here, in the antique shops, side by side with Sandwich glass and Hitchcock chairs, are lacquered boxes from China, crêpes and embroideries from Canton, ivories from Java and India, and *kaga* ware from Japan which was smuggled out by way of Batavia a century ago. In New Bedford, the auctioneer, offering for sale a bird cage intricately carved from teakwood adds, by way of recommendation, that, when it was first brought from Canton, it was full of many little gay-coloured birds.

The nearer we come to Boston and Salem the more we find these hints of a widespread contact with the Orient. On the outside, one sees only stately square-set mansions. But the sober exterior belies the bizarre magnificence within. More than one Harvard student, thinking he knows American history, has vaguely wondered at the pagoda lanterns in their gardens and the Ming pottery in their halls.

As one begins to note in the salt breezes of New England this whiff, as out of some bazaar—far-distant in Amritsar or Soochow—one seems to come suddenly on a whole buried world, the world of America before the Civil War when its economic life was rooted in the Far East and its imagination touched with the necromancy of that contact. These odds and ends of a borrowed decoration are the tangible ties and visible matter that once linked Salem to Calcutta, and Boston to Canton, and New Bedford, Nantucket, and all the whaling cities to Japan. They stand for what is still the informing spirit of some half-dozen old towns. They fill museums with a clutter of valuables little understood but fiercely cherished. They create an aureole about old China captains tottering to their decay; gray-haired maiden ladies, the last of stocks that long since expended their manhood on Oriental ports and savage shores; and wealthy families maintaining among themselves a freemasonry of recollections in which the industrial populations round about them have no share.

“One cannot,” says Havelock Ellis, “so much as put a spade into the garden mould of one’s cottage garden without now and

then finding ancient coins and shards of strange pottery." We have dug our spade into the Atlantic seaboard. Beginning with our own Berkshire bungalow, we followed the traces of imported luxury into the region of salt water, where there is no longer room for the sybarite tobacco plant, and scant harbourage in the corners of the pastures for apple trees. We have sought out the East India wharfs and have boarded whaleships deserted at their piers, and dissolving keel and tattered sails have told us their own story. We resurrected the personalities shaped by Hawaiian sun and arctic wind and the lax warm ease of life in the old Chinese hong. And we have found those to whom this day is dull, but who can yet locate by exact latitude and longitude islands in the Pacific that few of us ever heard of, for in memory they still chase the whale and club the seal and steer a clipper ship straight to glory around Cape Horn.

There is not much in all these human and material relics that a sober scholar would give a sixpence for. The best are in print or manuscript—straightforward, unadorned narratives locally printed and found only in local libraries, or manuscript letter-books kept with an almost jealous care, sometimes in private hands or in museums like the Essex Institute of Salem. Here one gets the story. Fresh, vigorous, contemporaneous, it is not here clouded, as in the oral tradition, by vagaries of old age, or the perversities of family reticence. But there is something for the heart and imagination, if not much for the intellect, in the old maritime societies and monuments excrecent above the general sea level of life; in the presence of men and women—now very old—whose youth took root in the last wreckage of that period. From them one seems to receive the tradition direct, by the laying on of hands.

## 2

Beginning with Salem, some twenty miles north of Boston, one may proceed southward and westward down the entire coast to Philadelphia and Baltimore and find always something to remind one of the Pacific. The legend is most vital in a multitude of small seaside villages where the old China captains

retired to live out their days, and where families are still subsisting frugally on the investments of the original Oriental hoard. But some of the larger cities, like Salem and New Bedford, still bear about them the consciousness of the past. From the orderly piles of log books and ledgers in the Essex Institute to the bulky houses along the cobblestone streets, the tough, hard fibre of the old East India town persists in spite of the lubricity of modern life. However industrious this factory town may now be, it was the wealth of the old India merchants that imbued it with dignity. With the wealth of the Far East they put up great mansions that have withstood the wear of time and taste; and whatever beauty the town possesses lies in them. The merchant of Venice adorned the public square; the merchant of Seville reared churches; the merchant of Salem builded him a house. To this day these fine houses look out from the clutter of other buildings like lovely eyes in a plain-faced woman. There is a gracious gesture in the way one stands slightly off the line of the street; a bold self-assertion in another which obstructs a thoroughfare. Now, whoever inhabits them, they remain essentially empty. Derby Street, which used to run along the edge of the harbour past the wharfs and was a landing place for pepper, coffee, spices, silks, teas, monkeys, and turbaned Madrassi crews, is virtually no more. We met but one Yankee upon that street who could recall anything of those days, and the only clear picture left him was of the strange sight of an old "Chinee" pushing a baby carriage containing the first heir to an Oriental million.

In Boston it is otherwise. The town which was the cis-Pacific partner to Canton when San Francisco was not even a beaching ground for Boston vessels was buried long since under brick and concrete. But the State Street Trust Company issues year after year charming little brochures which recall to its depositors those sea-faring days in the Far East that first gave power and opportunity to Boston banks; and the many stories appearing there, and not elsewhere in print, tap only a few of the resources of myth and anecdote current among those who still have the social prestige of an old adventure. But they,

after the manner of the priests and chroniclers of old, envelop their memories in clouds of sacred mystery. Mary Austin lived many years on the edge of the desert before the Indians would impart to her some of their lore. So, too, one must have a written endorsement from some resident on Beacon Street before the secretary of the Athenæum, with his limited powers, will let you glance through any of the records, left there by Perkins, one of its founders and a great China merchant. One is reminded of Thoreau's experience with the University librarian who refused to lend him any books. "The rules were getting to look so ridiculous," says Emerson, under Thoreau's onslaught, that he won his case. But rules are merely a process of rationalizing esoteric instincts in a civilized world, and are meant to put a halo around taboos.

A different world still lies between Boston and New York, the two that thrived most in the Far East and forgot the soonest. This small world of New Bedford, Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard, New London, Stonington, and Mystic, though it had a lesser stake in Oriental exploit, lives and dreams in those memories. The very land shares some of the aspects of the East. As we shot along in our car over the slippery macadam, looking down upon the rough shore and leaden sea, there flashed across our minds an image of another road in distant Asia. Where? The likeness eluded us! In the hills of Korea, the road upon which, cut deep with the wheels of ox-carts, in the old, old days the tribute went down to China. So here in free America the tribute went by this very road from the orchards on the hills, and men and treasure, alike humble and homespun, had come to the sea-going East Indiamen to pay the age-old obeisance to the most ancient wealth of the world. Farmer lads from Vermont had come, in due course, to be China captains or nameless, disappointed sailors; and stockings full of hoarded pennies went this way, too, to be sewn on the shores of the far Pacific to bear in time a bounteous harvest of dollars.

This New Bedford has not forgotten, for New Bedford went a-whaling. The people loved the whalemén; the whalemén

were of the people; and the humbler inhabitants of the whaling cities have never forgotten their own. Every man in these towns seems to have on his tongue's end stories of the sea which warm the course of the most casual conversation. The place is full of men who never went to sea except in imagination, but who can chart the wide Pacific to the last rock and spouting whale. The sign of the whale still hangs over a shop now devoted to left-over army and navy goods, and smiths still claim that they know how to make a harpoon; while bank clerks and retired business men lecture and encourage scribes to keep fresh that one great experience.

Some fifty miles beyond Buzzards Bay lie Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. "Nantucket! Take out your map and look at it!" cries Melville in "Moby Dick." "See what a real corner of the world it occupies. . . . Look at it—a mere hillock, an elbow of sand; all beach; without a background." Yet with all the sorry drawbacks, toadstools instead of trees, and the need of quicksand shoes, on this ant-hill in the sea—in spite of all Melville's crocodile tears, Nantucket supported an industry that truly extracted gold from the seas and inspired his narrative, which will grow more wondrous with receding time.

Nantucketers first, and men from the Vineyard, too, staked out the Pacific, laying up treasure in history to the extent of some four hundred islands discovered by their whaleships. Ugly, greasy, filthy tubs some of those whaleships were, yet men seemed to love them. In these plodding, goalless things men followed their own wayward impulses, and those of the mighty leviathan.

Yet to-day Nantucket is a miniature world of inarticulate romance. There is the melancholy expression of the tamed in the eyes of its inhabitants. Nantucket, for all the deluge of summer boarders, is still the most picturesque spot in eastern America. If in Melville's time it was bleak and rocky and as inhospitable a shore for a young nation as any albatross could find in a year's sailing, it is to-day a veritable oasis of quiet and peace away from our childlike industrial restlessness.

Hardly less so is Martha's Vineyard, which claims a goodly share in the spoils of Pacific whalery. Indeed, the Vineyard partakes somewhat of the nature of the Orient in its more sombre aspects. At sundown the road between Oak Bluffs and Edgartown, the old whaling village, lies like a river of frozen lava upon a flat sand-spit; the steel-gray sea to the left, the shallow lagoon to the right, the whale-back island beyond. As the autumn afternoon grows chill, the scene seems suddenly to fall, to turn wintry, just as in a moment of aberration the human face sometimes becomes aged and gaunt. In the still waters of the lagoon men stand knee deep in mud, digging for clams. How like a Japanese landscape! To this then have the sons and grandsons of the hunters of the leviathan descended? Digging for clams! and making more money in one half day's catch than their fathers made in five weeks of whale killing. . . . Yet here the few descendants of these whalemen treasure the *crêpe* shawls and trophies from the Far East, and keep fresh the names of the hundred-odd captains that sailed from the Vineyard on the great quest.

And so one digs, digs beneath the decay and digs beneath the new growths, and journeys from one spot to another. Down to New London, which went the way of all seacoast towns and took the inhospitable coves of the southernmost Pacific for its preserves. And there is Mystic, situate upon the Mystic River, where an entire hilltop was settled by retired sea captains, from which as they trod their "captain's walk" they could spy out their wandering argosies. Skippers' Street it was called, but it is now West Mystic Avenue, if you please; and some of the captains' mansions are now the renovated (and somewhat improved) residences of the owners of the mills across the river.

There remain along that lengthy seacoast three important centres wherein the relics of that far-flung chandlery may yet be found—Providence, New York, and Philadelphia. But there the century has heaped an eruption of human products and there a Carnarvon is needed to carry on excavations.

Literature has been indebted to the Custom House. Many a writer has earned his keep by fingering the records of East Indian munificence. Lamb, Mill, Hawthorne, and Melville thus found a source both of income and of inspiration, and so escaped Potter's Field.

But between the Custom House and the graveyard there is another fruitful necropolis to which fate may some day send a greater Melville—and that is the Historical Society. Every village in New England has its Historical Society. The local hospital may be struggling against a heavy deficit, or trying to pay off the mortgage on its frame building; but an elderly spinster, dying without heirs, bequeaths a fine colonial house upon a shady green to the Historical Society. And in that communal attic every grand-aunt henceforth conceives it not only her right but her duty to deposit some heirloom of whose history and significance she leaves no other record. And in these we rummaged everywhere.

To one of these cairns or modern kitchen-middens we once tried to gain access. Reluctantly, with that reverence for the dead which is the charm of the aged, with the air of one who is tired of this curiosity about the past, like the blasé attendant at a Shinto shrine, a tall, frail old woman capitulated with necessity and let us in. There was nothing musty about the interior. The late October sun was still mellowing these vaults. Not a speck of dust lay upon a single treasure. However much these individual things may have ministered to the pride or need of men and women in their separate walks of life, here they dwelt in a communistic bliss, without the ointment of a *thee* and *thou*. If, among these humble, hardy Quakers, there had been any social hills and valleys, they were here disclosed only in the accidental heaps that bore the rank of time rather than of genius. This, then, is the meaning of democracy: not only shall dust be given unto dust, but one's earthly possessions shall be sequestered without name or epitaph. Here victor and vanquished both reside; the har-

poon beside the whale's tooth, the tatting beside the immortal vase from Japan.

We felt more helpless in the midst of this accumulation than in the oldest country churchyard. Whenever we asked this old lady for the name of the person to whom an object belonged, she could not tell us. On occasion, she knew, but refused to tell. In one instance, we particularly desired to learn the connection of a Japanese vase with Nantucket. But like a Solomon Island missionary who once tried to get a Solomon Islander in Fiji to tell him how he got there, we had no success. Her tenacity hardened moment by moment. We sought to melt her.

"We are not trying to unearth some private scandal, madam. If any such surrounds this beauteous vase, why of course we shall let the dead bury its dead. But we, madam, are modern knights errant eager to restore to humble folk that of which death robbed them—a record of their exploits. All these lovely things once made men proud. They were doubtless accumulated with the dragnet of romance. We have a right to know, and it is your duty to divulge, these once-dear associations. One Japanese vase is as good as another, otherwise. So, too, one old sailor and captain. But they are gone and their stories with them. At least these hoardings should tell their tale for them."

But rise to whatever oratorical heights we might, all the reward we got was a welling of some indefinable emotion in her eyes, but never a word or a name would pass her lips. And unless some more voluble curator some day takes her place, the world will never know what terrible tale is locked up in that kiln-dried clay.

Then, as though to alienate us no further, she began of her own accord a story about a set of fine old tea-things from Canton. In spite of her seeming coldness, there came over her a glow of warmth, as among the ashes one scatters will sometimes flame an ember.

"I can tell you about this set, if you wish," she said, with that slow, teasing, yet defiant precision so characteristic of the self-reliant maiden lady. "An old friend of mine had received it

from her parents on her wedding day. For more than half a century they treasured it, she and her husband. They had become very poor in their old age, and while they would not sell it, they were afraid that in their little cottage it might be destroyed. So they asked us to take care of it with the promise that on their death it would become the property of the society. As soon as we put it in that case, an antique dealer asked us to sell it to him. We told him it was not ours, but knowing as how these old people were in need of money, we sent him to them. He rushed out to their little cottage. He found them in absolute want, both stone-blind. He offered them a fabulous sum for the set, a sum which would have lifted them out of their desperate situation." Here this curator hesitated, to see what effect the story was having on us. A look, at once proud and reverent, came into her face. Then, with an almost imperceptible slap of her hand against her thigh and a snapping of her jaw, she said: "They refused." Since then they have both died, within a few days of each other, for all we know, paupers, with no one to raise a tomb to them. And the Historical Society has written no epitaph below their gift. Nor does any one know why the set was so cherished.

Yet, for all their reticence, these museums and institutions stand as the symbols of the collective mind. In them one can see as under a microscope the habits and curiosities of an age which even the Custom House does not reveal. Where they are not under the care of scientists they are but the manifestation of another form of idol worship, the very worship which their collectors frequently went out to destroy. They are worshipped as the relics of ancestors, which after all is but ancestor worship by proxy.

But where, as at Salem in the Peabody Museum, or at New Bedford in the Dartmouth Historical Museum, they are kept by anthropologists, they serve a double purpose: they display the oddities of primitive mankind, and the curious inclinations of the civilized. Where in America, this side of the Bishop Museum at Hawaii, can one read the tale of our early 19th-century relations with the Orient more accurately? Where other than at the Dartmouth Historical Society, with its display

of whalemens' spoils and ships' logs, could we trace more clearly the source of *Moby Dick*? In this day of Culture Clubs, and Kiwanis, it is startling to note by contrast the sobriety and general interest which actuated the sea captains and supercargoes of Salem to collect "such facts and observations as tend to the improvement and security of navigation, and to form a museum of natural and artificial curiosities such as are to be found beyond the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn." While the present Peabody Museum has been developed largely under the skilful direction of Mr. Morse and Mr. Jenkins, still the basic collection made by the East India Marine Society was indicative of a wide interest in the world and represents a life in the Pacific and the Far East rapidly disappearing.

Though we have shed these enterprises from our national consciousness, they still maintain some of their status in their own communities. There may yet be found sailors' clubs, marine societies, the Pacific Club of Nantucket, the old Jibboom Club of New London, and their like. Most of the newer members have hardly more than sailed a skiff across the bay. Here and there a genuine old captain hangs about, lonely amidst the scribes and playwrights who in commodores' hats and sneakers berate the sons of Nantucket whalemens for being unable to enter into the spirit deemed requisite for the erection of a boathouse. And while the musty smell is vanishing the legend is thickening, and the task of fashioning it to some universal pattern becomes more difficult with each passing year; these grisly corsairs become legendary personages and acquire social significance akin to the ancient soothsayers and skalds and the keepers of genealogies among savages. A few bandit Greeks upon the hills of Parnassos preserved that ancient language with all its legend, passion, and music. A few remaining sea captains are passing on to this generation the legends of an arduous era.

There seem to have been an infinite number of captains in those days. Well-nigh everyone one meets had a captain for an ancestor. We are reminded of a well-known Southern "colonel" who declares that he has some two million relatives

in the South, and has already met three million of them. So with New England captains. Common sailors, it seems, were never so numerous. We have yet to meet a man or a woman whose forefathers were in the forecastle. The only ones we know of who ever admitted such an ignominious position were Richard Dana and Herman Melville, and they washed themselves of the sin by writing books about it. Perhaps poor Jack was unable to marry and leave children. Be that as it may, only sons and daughters of captains survive.

Thus, in the closing scene, we have a vision of gaunt captains and gray-haired maiden ladies. Wherever one goes in these districts these gray-haired ladies live on to tell the story of that venture of their men into the world that, with but a few exceptions, was to them a wonder and a wild surmise. Women once radiating warmth and maternity are now merely embers on a deserted hearth. One wonders to what end these captains chased the whale, tormented their crews, and dried up the wells of affection in the bosoms of their wives, daughters, and sweethearts. Yet these hover over the relics of that past with a touching fondness. They are the keepers of the museums, of the historical societies. There is something of the Sister of Mercy about them. In another civilization they would be the historians, the preservers of national treasures; but before being entrusted with that task they would be given a course of study in psychology and things esoteric, with an eye to the human associations and the intrinsic loveliness of the trove.

Meanwhile the porcelain and brocade and lacquer brought from China still shine against the plain white walls of many New England homesteads, and through the homespun fabric of Puritan life runs, like a scarlet thread, the legend of that adventure at the ends of the earth. It is on this account that we write, because New Bedford still goes whaling in imagination, and Salem dreams, in its decay, of Sumatra and of Java Head, and some little portion of the heart of Boston is still in Canton. And so all up and down the land the lives of men are different to-day because a century ago men went in pursuit of the fabulous gold of the East.

BOOK ONE  
EASTWARD BY SEA



## CHAPTER I

### GOLD OF OPHIR

Then went Solomon to Ezion-geber, and to Eloth, on the sea shore in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent him by the hands of his servants ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they came with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and fetched from thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought them to King Solomon. . . . And the servants also of Hiram, and the servants of Solomon, which brought gold from Ophir, brought algum trees and precious stones. . . . For the king had ships that went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram; once every three years came the ships of Tarshish, bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks.

2 CHRONICLES VIII, 18—LX, 10.

THE earthquake in the Sea of Japan in 1923 did more than damage Tokyo. It frustrated the scheme of a British spiritual healer and metaphysician for extracting gold from the ocean by denuding the seven seas of more than 50 per cent. of their gold. In America alone, eighty thousand people believed in Frederick L. Rawson; if not in his briny treasure, at least in his possession of the key to happiness and his power to reveal the secrets of eternal life. Not all the billions, then, in which the world to-day wallows are able to satiate either man's thirst for some tangible form of immortality or his hunger for gold. These two quests have always had power to set men and ships in motion. Old age has had, as his companion on the trek for the Fountain of Youth, Youth, with a spade for treasure. One seeks perpetual life; the other digs for something to live on.

A renewed and passionate pursuit of these imaginary goods inaugurated the modern age, which began with the discovery of America and the opening of the sea routes to the Far East, and ended with the gold rush to California. As the mediæval hope of a paradise beyond the sepulchre began to wane, men looked with increasing desire to a paradise on earth. And what

was Heaven in the Apocalypse but a city walled with jewels and paved with gold, wherein the river of eternal life flows on perpetually? To the Spaniards in America, the Fountain of Youth proved only a delusion: it was not in Florida, nor in the springs that fed the Mississippi, nor even in the fancied streams of the great river of the West—for no man knew where to look for it. But with the search for gold it was otherwise. Its rewards were material, though not always in the forms that had been imagined. Ships that sailed to find the rainbow's pot returned with sacks of good Spanish dollars. Men who pursued fabulous kingdoms found fertile lands on which to build their homesteads. Nevertheless, the thirst for the fairy gold can never be quenched by material possessions, and so, however valuable the continent of America upon which they stumbled proved to be, Europeans continued to look across to treasures of the Far East, beyond.

For, since the days when the golden fleece first hung on an Oriental tree, the source of phantasmal treasure has been definitely located in the East. The pious adventurers of the 19th Century identified the stuff they sought with the mysterious gold of Solomon which came to him in the ships of Tarshish, along with ivory, apes, and peacocks. In this faith they left the word "Ophir" scattered up and down the Pacific as a name for a variety of villages and humps of earth whose gravel showed delusively bright. Centuries before, "The Indies" and "Cathay" had been terms to conjure with. "Gold of Ophir" and "Wealth of the Indies"—like the Rheingold and the apples of Hesperides—are all coinage in the same bank, promissory notes in the incalculable finance of fairyland. And the location of Ophir, so frequently referred to in the Bible, has been the subject of extensive controversies no less interesting than the disputations which gave Columbus his cue and the American Indians their name.

Even as late as 1900, Doctor Keane, Carl Peters, Max Müller, and others were engaged in a controversy concerning the land from which Solomon obtained his gold. Ophir has been placed in India, the Malayan Peninsula, the Moluccas, Armenia, Phry-

gia, Spain, Peru, and Sumatra, not to mention the belief of Columbus that in Haiti he had put into the possession of their Spanish Majesties "Mount Soporo (Mt. Ophir) which it took King Solomon's ships three years to reach." While we refrain from entering this controversy, we, who have seen four hundred years of ophiric wanderings from Europe across America to China, are content to conclude that Ophir is but another El Dorado, and lies wherever the earth is rich in products and wherever there are human beings capable of tapping its resources.

Be that as it may, under whatever guise or title men have sought the wells of luxury, it was the muffled fame of China and of India, generally called "the Indies," that drew all adventure eastward and westward around the world. By the 13th Century, stories of China's riches began to penetrate Europe. Carpini, the Franciscan friar, one of the first Europeans to enter the Far East, had reported of the Chinese: "Their betters as craftsmen in every art practised by man are not to be found in the whole world. Their country is very rich in corn, in wine, in gold and silver, in silk, and every kind of produce tending to the support of mankind."

There followed other tales of splendour and wealth untold. Two Venetian merchants had turned their steps toward Constantinople, but still athirst for adventure, pressed on in the direction of unknown Cathay. These were the two Polo brothers, and one of them took with him his little son, Marco. So rich in romance are the Travels of Marco Polo and the story of his experiences that which one of us to this very day would not give all his prospects for a taste of such? Then, as Havelock Ellis says, "China at last took definite shape alike as a concrete fact and a marvellous dream." The more the unknown becomes known through discovery and invention, the more will the charm of this mediæval narrative hold our imaginations. Polo roamed from end to end of China. There he loved a Chinese princess, and there he ruled a Chinese province. And when, after a quarter century of extravagances, the Polos returned to Venice, proud and egotistical Europe

would not credit their tales. During the centuries that followed there was an extensive intercourse between Genoa and Florence and China, interrupted and closed for centuries at a time, and again renewed by the Portuguese. The process of attraction and repulsion continued into the 17th Century, the Chinese rebuffing every advance of Europe; but the knowledge of the importance of the wealth of the East did not permit the Europeans to be daunted.

In the centuries that followed the discovery of America, the mythical gold of the East bore a full harvest of blood and broken hearts, and heroic experience standing within a spotlight of vast, incredible splendour. Columbus, who had taken possession of the island which he had found "inhabitated by men without number, with proclaiming heralds and flying standards—no one objecting," had also found himself thrown into irons for his pains. Similarly, Balboa had given his ungrateful king the whole of the Pacific, "with whatever lands and peoples it contained." Mendaña, anticipating rivers whose sands were of gold, had discovered and named the Solomon Islands in honour of that rich patron of Ophir.

By the middle of the 17th Century, the British East India Company was solidly enthroned in India and was taking upon itself the white man's burden and the dark man's jewels. To this group of London traders the British Government, imitating the Pope who had with generosity disposed of what did not belong to him, had given a monopoly of all the wealth to be found by trade or discovery between Cape Horn on one side and the Cape of Good Hope on the other. In consequence, the East India Company had become the rival of states and empires, with power to "acquire territory, coin money, command fortresses and troops, form alliances, make war and peace, and exercise both civil and criminal jurisdiction." The British Government did not look with entire complacency upon this great commercial state it had raised within the state. Still, it found the convenience of milking the company too valuable to tamper with that princely and extra-legal pretence.

One gets a somewhat clearer conception of the value of this

cart-load of goods which the "Honourable John Company" took out of India from the earnings of some of its captains and crews. For a captain to net from one trip \$20,000 aside from the profits from the turnover he indulged in rather casually—primage, passenger fares which amounted to hundreds of dollars, and other forms of squeeze—was an ordinary event. As though this were not enough, East India ships took to carrying dunnage in the form of chinaware, canes, bamboos, rattans, and other marketable goods which, when disposed of, amounted to from thirty to fifty thousand dollars annually. Naturally, this was not the exclusive monopoly of the captain. In order to secure the faithfulness of the officers and crews the process of filching with honour had to be graded downward. And it was. The ships were heavily manned, largely as a matter of military protection, but in consequence afforded ample leisure to the men. This leisure was also provided for with rum and "skylarking." Eight years of service was regarded as sufficient to merit retirement on a pension, which doubtless few found desirable so long as the active earnings were good. Multiply the above estimates for the trip or the year by the two hundred and thirty-four years of active exploitation of India by the Company (in which estimates we have given no indication of the earnings of the directors and the Government), solve this little multiplication problem and the earnings of this one project in the Indies staggers the imagination.

Yet Britain was not alone in the exploitation of the Indies. The Dutch traders, driven out of European trade by Spain, turned to the East for a livelihood, exactly as did the Americans after the Revolution, two centuries later. Like the British traders they attained independence in their political and diplomatic relations, and wealth scarcely less incredible. At the summit of its prosperity in 1669, the Dutch East India Company possessed 150 trading ships, 40 ships of war, 10,000 soldiers, and paid a dividend of 40 per cent. They were in possession of islands still known as the Dutch East Indies, once the mysterious spice isles, and even now the lodestone of romance to novelists who, like Conrad, Couperous, and all their imita-

tors, can coin into royalties their sunsets and blazing dawns and the life of men on the borderline between white and brown.

Thus was Columbus justified, though he never delivered the letter he bore from their Spanish Majesties to the great Khan of Cathay.

## 2

All this was not accomplished without much that Clio, in her righteousness, must turn from with a shamed face; nor was all search for wealth so copiously rewarded. For one who looked for the Gold of Ophir in honest trade there were a hundred who tried to get it by robbery or some species of economic witchcraft. To Europe, the Oriental exclusiveness seemed as haughty and unjust as our attitude to the Orientals seems to them to-day. India, China, and even little Japan possessed all the good things of life. Ignorant and avaricious, Europe felt that she was entitled to take by force when barter and persuasion failed. There was many an ugly incident, resulting, among other things, in the closing of Japan to Europeans in fear of the political machinations of the Jesuits, and the ultimate conquest of India by the British—for in the history of Ophir silver clouds have frequently black linings.

The New World which was included in this vision of East Indian wealth was, to all but the Spaniards, a disappointment in the way of gold and jewels. But such was the ferment created in the minds of Europeans by these distant splendours that men were ripe for any scheme of increment, be it ever so audacious or ridiculous. The possibilities of enrichment, the actual flow of wealth from Mexico, Peru, India, Java, and China, not only made the previously settled life of Europe more fluent, but so gaseous that the simplest spark would send it off in explosion. The repercussion upon Europe came in the first quarter of the 18th Century. Wars and exploitation were followed by inflation. If gold was not as plentiful as might be hoped, two new continents were waiting to be developed. Between 1695 and 1720, three grand schemes were concocted which tormented Scotland, deluded France, and humiliated England,

and have not been rivalled even by our own little 20th-century Teapot Dome scandal. These were the Darien Expedition, the Mississippi Scheme, and the South Sea Bubble.

The Darien Expedition was the first of those preliminary visions of an emporium that should command the trade of the Far East by way of America and the Pacific which recurred time and again in the minds of such dreamers as John Ledyard and John Jacob Astor. Dreams as they were for centuries, they are now greatly amplified in the development of America. For the Panama Canal and San Francisco have sprung from the same germ concept as that which projected the Darien Expedition. In 1695, a Scottish company "trading to Africa and the Indies" proposed to establish a colony on the Isthmus of Darien as a general emporium for the nations of the world. The thrifty Scotsmen lost their heads over this scheme and sent several thousands of their finest sons and daughters to the Isthmus. No colony could have had a more hopeful send-off. The whole nation organized itself behind them largely in the hope of thereby rivalling England, and "subscriptions sucked up all the money in the country." With the first band of colonists went the hearts and hopes of Scotland. The shores resounded with cheers as they set sail, and hardly one of the onlookers but would gladly have gone with them. A second and a third group followed. But despite these draughts of men and money on Scotland and the possession of an excellent harbour and defence against the Spaniards, they succumbed to unforeseen tropical evils. Sick, and dispirited by the religious fanaticism of a few, the remnant was defeated by the Spaniards, and of the thousands that left Scotland so joyously only a miserable handful returned.

A sound economic idea had, nevertheless, been at the bottom of the Darien Expedition, and was not to be discouraged by failure. Out of the widening of the imagination by the genuine wealth of the Indies and the vast unused acres of America emerged theories of economics which, though crude and radical at the outset, are now the basis of international commerce and credit. None gave more vitality and scope to these machina-

tions than John Law, gambler superb and financial genius. Though an exiled Scotsman in Paris, Law undertook to rehabilitate the finances of the French regent, the Duke of Orleans, which had been depleted by the extravagance of Louis XIV. By tying up the monopoly of the potential trade of the Mississippi region with the decadent Oriental companies, *Des Indes Orientales* and *De Chine*, Law secured absolute control of the foreign trade of France. So alluring was his whole prospectus that he turned Paris into a gambling den in which the nobility scrambled with the peasantry for shares, and paper money swept round like autumn leaves. One hunchback is said to have made a fortune of 150,000 francs merely by renting his hump to the public as a desk for frenzied financiers to write upon. Within the course of a few days Law had the unpleasant experience of bickering with his own former servant for the services of a coachman. Law became more powerful than the ruler, and men and women spent thousands for mere sight of him, or *entrée* to his office. Between just the few years of 1716-1719, John Law, who began as an outlawed gambler, the son of a reputable family and himself not without reputation as an economist—within those few years Law attained undreamed-of power and prestige. But when his airy schemes failed, the distress and misery that overtook France were mitigated only by the dramatic justice meted out to this great economist who had fallen a victim to his own precocious devices.

It would seem that this greed for fabulous wealth should have been surfeited by these two schemes alone. In England, at the same time, another orgy of madness was breaking down the faith of Europe in the mystical powers of great schemers to create wealth out of nothing by calling to their aid the jinn that attend on the Orient. There, Robert Harley, later Earl of Oxford, founded the South Sea Company in 1711. This company was to trade with Peru and the islands that lie off its coast in the Pacific. Nine years later it took over the National Debt of England and induced so much speculation that all industry came virtually to a stand-still. Hundreds of bubbles,

schemes for making sudden wealth, sprang into being and found their gullible subscribers, from companies for furnishing funerals to any part of Great Britain, to a company for making a wheel for perpetual motion, and another for extracting silver from lead. Neither high nor low escaped contamination. As in France, where the Regent was directly involved, so in England, the King was made governor of the company. When the crash came it carried with it ruin and desolation, suicide and despair. Ministers of State were expelled from Parliament, estates were confiscated, the Prime Minister arraigned and nearly found guilty, the King reviled. One of the most sober peoples in money matters in the world had been seduced.

As a moral lesson this was perhaps not a misfortune. It took centuries of experiment to refute the faith in an "elixir" or philosopher's stone which could transmute the baser metals into gold; it took some such upheaval as this to convince Europe of the futility of seeking for wealth without labour. Yet, just as the alchemists were the parents of modern chemistry, so the gold hunters were the uncoverers of the world. Astrology, purporting to forecast the fate of men, led, by turning their minds toward the heavens, to the charting of the unknown seas. By the last quarter of the 18th Century these superstitions were converging and trying to usher modern science into being. "The quest of gold being at the same time a questioning of substances," says George Eliot, "the body of chemistry is prepared for its soul, and Lavoisier is born." While Lavoisier, the French chemist, was overthrowing alchemy and establishing modern chemistry, Captain James Cook was wandering about the Pacific in the pursuit of scientific discovery. Hitherto, navigators had but one propelling force behind them—gold. But in a saner spirit Captain Cook now went out to observe the transit of Venus and to search for the northwest passage and discovered the South Seas, Hawaii, and the northern reaches of the Pacific. The universal import of his expeditions was recognized by Benjamin Franklin, himself a scientist, and then Commissioner of Marines in France. In issuing Letters of Marque to American privateering vessels to

sweep the British off the seas Franklin gave instructions concerning Cook that ring with a nobility beyond the time and the occasion. For he bespoke not only the rights of non-combatants but the rights of science and humanity. He warned all privateers that wheresoever they might meet the discoverer Captain Cook they were not only to let him pass unmolested, but to offer him every assistance in their power, "for 'twould ill-beseem any American to lift his hand against one who was the benefactor of the whole world." A new conscience was awakening in the breast of mankind. After what was perhaps the longest, most continuous, insatiable quest for treasure the world has ever known, Europe was faced by the hard facts of a wild, ungarnished reality, with vast continents unpenetrated and isolated savage races to be made more amicable. Europe found at the rainbow's end an earth in need of tilling.

## 3

The age of fable was over. Every corner of the cultured earth was virtually preëmpted. India had been forced to disgorge, and China, still independent and aloof, was being hunted out of her isolation. Spain was crumbling beneath the weight of unearned wealth, while Great Britain, France, and Holland sought by a semblance of trade with a more wholesome economic basis to expand by the process of productive exploitation. All these harpies, in search of easy luxuries, continued in the safe paths that lay between them and the Far East.

But they were all without imagination, or, perhaps, with their imaginations dulled. Bubbles and promises they had pursued in their youth. Now they had learned not to listen to the enthusiasms of dreamers. Even so auspicious an undertaking as that of Captain Cook ended in his murder and the death, off China, of his second in command. If the much-coveted route to China was to be found it would have to be otherwise than by the Arctic Ocean.

Cook's vessels were brought safely back to England under the third in command, Lieutenant Gore, an American. And one day, toward the close of the Revolution, another American

who had been Corporal of the Marines under Gore deserted his British ship at Long Island and surprised his mother whom he had not seen in years. He also surprised his countrymen by publishing at Hartford an account from memory of the Cook expedition, in which he tells that he, John Ledyard, of Groton, Connecticut, had been within a few feet of the great captain when at Hawaii he fell from a savage blow, with his face downward into the outgoing tide. This is the only account of Cook's death by an eyewitness. Among the other by-products of his youthful experience, he told of the excitement that ensued during the sojourn of Cook's ships at Canton when the Chinese discovered some worn-out furs upon the sailors' bunks. So eager were the Chinese for these pelts that they paid a hundred dollars apiece for what had not cost the seamen a sixpence. The furs had been obtained from the American Indians on the Northwest coast in exchange for a few trinkets, said Ledyard, and added, with boyish enthusiasm, that Captain Cook nearly had a mutiny on his hands, so inflamed were the crews with the desire to return for more furs. All that Ledyard said was received with skepticism. It wanted only the arrival of Cook's published records to verify the statement of the first American to visit the north Pacific and the Far East.

The world was surfeited with gaudy promises. But Ledyard still had the faith born of a wide experience, transfigured by youth and genius. The more he thought it over, the more he saw the possibilities of enrichment beyond all others in that inaccessible world. A vessel could go to the Northwest by way of Cape Horn, trade a few trifles for furs, sell these to the Chinese, reload with tea, silks, and spices, and return by way of the Cape of Good Hope to New York. While he was not above appreciating the possibilities of making some money for himself in the process, his real desire was that he himself should be dropped off on what is now the coast of Oregon to make his way back to the Atlantic seaboard across the continent never before penetrated by any white man. Thus at one stroke that Northwest Passage which had been the goal of explorers for centuries would be opened by land and supplemented by

sea, and the Atlantic commonwealths, now struggling for nationhood, might snap their fingers in the face of Europe. In the Pacific they would find both goods and markets. All his life Ledyard believed that he had been the first and, except in so far as men imitated him, the only one to perceive this possibility for the Americans in a path across the continent to the Pacific. And events justified him. The history of his country has been the fulfilment of his vision, and the two great expeditions that made it possible for us to take full possession of the continent were directly inspired by him.

From the scanty account of his biographer, it is hard to determine how completely he thought out his plan in all its details and implications. But Ledyard saw enough to consecrate his life to it in a devotion such as few men have equalled. Young, penniless, and unknown, he went up and down the north Atlantic coast, driven from counting room to counting room, from merchant to merchant, from wharf to wharf, by the power of this conviction. Disappointed in New York, Philadelphia, New London, and Boston, he went to France and England. He had won the friendship and faith of Robert Morris and now added to his list the names of Thomas Jefferson, John Paul Jones, and General Lafayette. But "Here is another scatter-brained bubble maker," said sober merchants, as they turned away. And thus gullible humanity cheated itself as it has ever done by denying its prophets because it has been fooled by its sorcerers. Yet it was this scheme that was to make secure the achievements of the Revolution and contribute heavily to making the continent wholly American.

His was but one of a long list of tragedies that will never be completed. The great poem singing the praises of this gold hunger has not been written. In spite of the execrations heaped upon it, there has been no human passion more fruitful of good to man than this passion for gold. Hidden away within the bowels of granite mountains and beneath turbulent streams, or beyond the sands of the deserts, the pursuit of gold has rewarded mankind with the discovery of the world itself, of science, and of the knowledge of good and evil. What if Eve had

not eaten the apple? So much more the benefactor than was the snake. And Herodotus tells us that there were snakes guarding the spice isles in the seas, and that "the trees which bear the frankincense are guarded by the winged serpents." And was not America kept hidden from Europe by sea monsters? What if Columbus had feared them? Conceived and nourished in the myth of Eastern treasure, America has no reason to scorn this shining ancestry. The Gold of Ophir is the great demagogue, the great leader, the great teacher.

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## CHAPTER II

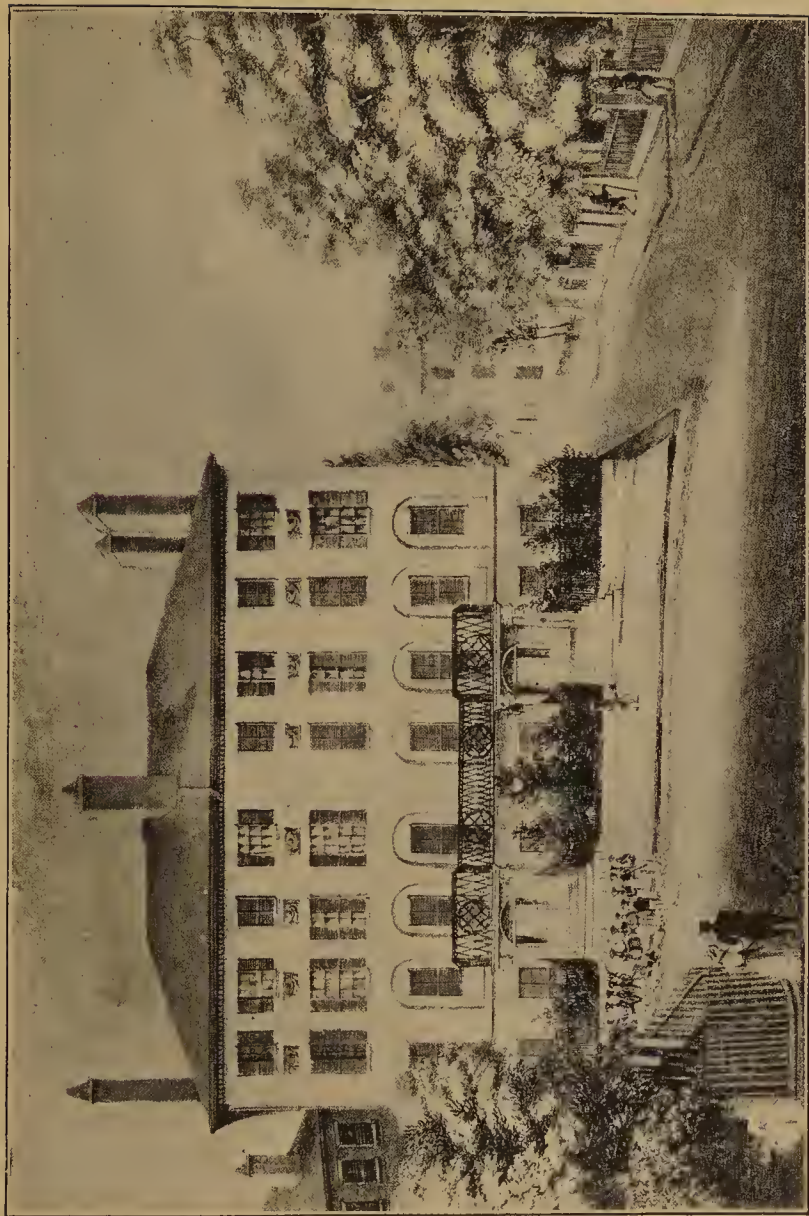
### AMERICA RENEWS THE QUEST

**E**VEN John Ledyard had his moments of good luck. Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution, on the verge of that bankruptcy which landed him in his old age in the debtors' prison, promised to get him a vessel to sail by way of Cape Horn for the Northwest and Canton. At once Ledyard saw himself on the pinnacle of glory.

"I take the lead of the greatest commercial enterprise that has ever been embarked on by this country," he wrote to his cousin, Isaac Ledyard, at Princeton, "and one of the first moment as respects the trade of America," and, he adds by way of postscript, "Send me some money, for Heaven's sake, lest the laurel now suspended over the brow of your friend should fall irrevocably in the dust. Adieu."

The money came, but not the laurels. The path that had been good enough for Great Britain and Holland was good enough for Americans. So, when John Ledyard's promised ship, the *Empress of China*, was ready, it set sail from New York for Canton by way of the Cape of Good Hope instead of Ledyard's untried route. A promising mercantile adventure, to be sure, but not Ledyard's idea at all. He was no trader, he was an explorer by nature, and the return on foot across America from Oregon was the dearest part of his plan. Disappointed that he could not be the first American to cross the continent, under American patronage, but not disheartened, he set sail for Europe. But his plan was yet to survive the poor youth's brief, brilliant, and tragic life.

Nevertheless, Ledyard's promised ship had an interesting career, after all, and inaugurated a course of commerce which, if it lacked the bold and far-reaching implications of Ledyard's proposals, was, in the economic life of the new nation, remark-



*Here at the Bulfinch House Ledyard's scheme was seriously entertained and the fur trade by way of the Horn first projected*



able enough. "I am sending some ships to China," wrote Robert Morris to John Jay in 1783, "in order to encourage others in the adventurous pursuits of commerce." The thought of China was kindling the imagination of the Americans, who had still to learn not only how they were to govern themselves, but how each separate citizen was to make a living. They were sorely in need of this encouragement. Most of the old social and economic props had been swept away. The wealthy families had mostly been Tories. In some cases their estates had been confiscated and the owners had fled. In others, the loyalists still lived on, impoverished and unpopular, hoping for better times. The men of education and capacity who had been officers in the Revolutionary army for eight years, through the best years of early manhood, now faced middle life, loaded with debts and without professions. Merchants and sea captains, whose circumscribed enterprises, under the ensign of Great Britain, had been the economic foundation of these maritime communities, found that Great Britain had shut in their faces their old trading ports in the West Indies, and even in Europe. As for the common people, they were many of them discharged soldiers out of jobs, and imbued with the idle, turbulent, excitement-loving habit of mind which wars engender.

Public life suffered from the penury of private individuals. State and municipal governments were disorganized. It was almost impossible to collect taxes. The people, hungry for the small amenities of life long denied them by war, bought extravagantly of British manufactured goods on extended credit, still further depleting their resources and demoralizing their character. There was a semi-socialistic gospel of rebellion among the farmers and labourers which later culminated in armed conflict in western Massachusetts. The national government was too weak to help either the states or their industries, and the chaos was increased by a general philosophy of revolt. "God forbid," wrote Jefferson, then minister to France, to Colonel Smith, in November, 1787, "that we should ever be twenty years without a rebellion."

Without the least notion of the latent possibilities of their own continent, content to be let alone on the fringe of it, facing Europe, with deep savage forests behind them and rough infested seas before, a few daring Americans bethought themselves in their plight to turn toward the same old promised lands of the Far East. Had not the honourable East India Company to which Boston had paid its respects in the tea-party drawn its wealth and its power to torment the restive Americans from the Orient? Had not Holland, more than a century before, similarly demoralized by war and hampered in her mercantile operations in Europe, found relief in the Indies? China was rich. China was beyond the control of the commercial enmity of Great Britain. China could provide the Americans with some of their favourite luxuries and supply them with goods which could be traded to advantage elsewhere.

Moreover, for a people hardly recognized as yet among the comity of nations, China was a safe venture. To China all Europeans alike were but avaricious barbarians, and the Americans could hope for no less consideration in her eyes than the rest. Since they had been accustomed to call each other by that gentle title of Barbarian, the French, the Dutch, the English, the Danes, Portuguese, and Spaniards saw nothing for them to do but to speak softly and wink loudly at this Celestial disdain. China had that which they all wanted. She doled it out grudgingly, to be sure, with high-flown expressions of generosity, but at that there was enough to go round. In their eagerness for tea, silks, and ceramics, Europeans were truly equals, and the more men came to tap the wealth of Cathay, the more chance had they of breaking through that great Oriental barrier.

So long as the Colonies were part of Great Britain they were nominally represented in the Orient, though actually debarred from its advantages. Not only were they not encouraged to build up their distant commerce, but they were shut out from the Indies by monopolies and deprived by law of the advantages of competition. "If a Dutch merchant vessel laden with cloves, cinnamon, teas, and silks from the Far

East anchored in the harbour of New York, the inhabitants could not lawfully buy of the ship's master, no matter how much lower his prices were than those offered by English shippers." The only ships and sailors therefore going to and fro were East Indiamen, the images of contempt for these distant landlubbers who knew nothing of the great ports of the world beyond the Atlantic.

Lack of experience was not their chief handicap. It could be overcome quickly enough by experiment and tact. What was needed was an adequate cargo, one that would interest the Chinese. Even to the wares of Europe the Chinese maintained an attitude of indifference. As Sir Robert Hart said, the Chinese had the best food in the world, rice; the best drink in the world, tea; the best clothing in the world, silk. What could the impecunious Americans offer a people like that? Only one offering presented itself. In the Hudson Valley and elsewhere there grew a plant which Americans looked on as a weed, but which had an extraordinary interest for the Chinese. It resembled a root, ginseng, native to Manchuria and Korea, so greatly valued by the Chinese as a medicine that at times it sold for as much as three and four hundred dollars an ounce. Even in colonial days the British and Dutch East India companies had discovered that this American ginseng might be sold in China under the name of the Chinese product and had the same wonderful medicinal properties—which, as a matter of fact, were not therapeutic in any sense, but purely psychic. Since nothing with this unique power over the Chinese imagination grew in Europe, the Americans, in declaring their independence, had carried off with them a special advantage in the Canton market.

Once the prospect of beguiling the Chinese with ginseng became tangible the China trade was encouraged with enthusiasm. From Philadelphia to Salem, men were "boosting" it. When Morris, reckless perhaps through necessity born of past miscalculations, launched forth with a ship direct for Canton, he was only the first to do what half a dozen others, in Salem, Boston, and Providence, were thinking of. In February,

1784, the *Empress of China* set sail from New York with a cargo of ginseng, carrying as supercargo Major Samuel Shaw, a gallant young officer in the Revolution, and a popular citizen of Boston. Ambitious and poverty-stricken like most of the other men of cultivation who had thus served their country, Shaw found release and new prospects in this venture in China.

The voyage was agreeable enough, with many a sociable pause by the way, in the ports of Africa and the Far East, for everywhere merchants and officials were interested in this début of a new nation on the seas. When the flag of the new states appeared in the Pearl River below Canton, it caused much friendly excitement among the European traders, and was received with that mannerliness which the atmosphere of the Far East engenders. "Previously to our coming to anchor," reported Shaw, "the French sent two boats with anchors and cables under an officer, who assisted us in getting into a good berth and stayed on board till we moored. The Danish sent an officer to compliment, the Dutch a boat to assist, and the English an officer to 'welcome your flag to this part of the world.'" The British, of course, were not unmindful of recent difficulties, but those Englishmen Major Shaw encountered rose to the occasion beautifully. "The English allowed the war to have been a great mistake," says Major Shaw in his Journal, "were happy it was over, glad to see us in this part of the world, hoped all prejudices would be laid aside, and added, [with something of homesickness in their ardour], let America and England be united, they would bid defiance to all the world."

Intimate as the contact between these little bands of white men under Chinese surveillance was, the intercourse between different nationalities was governed by a strict code of etiquette, and precedence ruled there as rigorously as in any other diplomatic life. Major Shaw was dined by each of the thirteen nations in turn, and was bound to receive and pay calls in a certain order, as though he were a diplomat. The trader of one nation stood to the trader of another as the representative of his whole

country. On a later voyage, when the head of the British establishment, who was a very forgetful man, failed to produce an invitation that was due the Americans, Shaw would not again visit the British headquarters, no matter how numerous and cordial were the invitations to do so, until this man left. Yet it was understood, on all sides, to have been merely an oversight, and Shaw's relations with the delinquent Englishman continued to be, personally, warm and kindly. This was the conduct that was expected of him. The eyes of thirteen other nations were on him, to see whether he would take even an inadvertent slight to his flag.

In this complex situation, Shaw showed himself, from the first, to be very much a man of the world, affable, courtly, but capable of standing on his dignity, and bearing himself with all the assurance of a man who has a great navy close behind his simple trading vessel. And all the while, with due exchange of salaams, he was observing the curious conditions of trade in China and noting them down in his book.

For in those days the lordly white man was not so high and mighty in his own eyes. Not till after they had replenished their larders from the granaries of Asia did the Europeans conceive of themselves as superior to their victims. Quite the reverse. It was the Oriental who held himself in too high esteem. In response to a fine display of mechanical contraptions the Emperor of China, wrapped in invisibility at Peking, replied through his officials in words which may be freely translated thus: "Our Empire produces all that we ourselves need. Your mechanical toys do not interest me in the least. But since our tea, rhubarb, and silk seem to be necessary to the very existence of the barbarous Western peoples, we will, imitating the clemency of Heaven Who tolerates all sorts of fools on this globe, condescend to allow a limited amount of trading through the port of Canton."

When, therefore, the affable Major Shaw arrived, even the British East India Company enjoyed only a limited "sojourn in Canton," which it was not permitted to forget was purely "on sufferance, through the benevolence of the Celestial Dy-

nasty" and out of a general "feeling of commiseration for the distant coming barbarian."

Unfortunately, we have as yet no records of the impression the foreigners made on the Chinese other than in political reflection. But we do know that to distinguish Americans from the English, the Chinese referred to the newcomers as "New People." As we trace the course of the next half century of diplomacy (or rather lack of it) in the quarrels, wars, and treaties, this distinction becomes less marked, and we see the Chinese capitulating with the white world as would a gentleman with a highway robber.

Meanwhile, reverting to the arrival of the *Empress of China* in Canton, with her cargo of ginseng and specie, we see how by an inverse process her petty lading commenced the making of America just as it began the undoing of China. For while the profit was not fabulous, it was to young America what his first dollar is to a boy. When all expenses had been deducted after the return of Samuel Shaw to New York on May 10, 1785, the owners found themselves \$30,000 richer for the experiment. Sitting snugly at home they had earned 25 per cent. profit during fifteen months the *Empress* was en route.

The successful conclusion of the enterprise was hailed with enthusiasm all up and down the Atlantic coast. The newspapers of Boston, Providence, New York, and Philadelphia carried long accounts of it and resounded with editorial encomiums. It encouraged those who without capital or knowledge in large measure had been contemplating similar performances. As a sarcastic Southern gentleman once remarked, every little village on every little creek with a sloop that could hold five Yankees was now planning to embark upon the Far Eastern trade. The echoes of this hopeful discussion even reached London, and led a London paper to remark soothingly that the Americans after all would not be serious competitors.

The sequence of this venture touched more than the counting-house. Shaw made a report to the Continental Congress. After considering his lucid, intelligent and hopeful exposition,

Congress congratulated him with "peculiar satisfaction in the successful issue of this first effort of the citizens of America to establish a direct trade with China." Stimulated by the prospect of a place in the world that was not subject to the selfish provincialism of nations nor to the petty localism of the separate states, the troubled Congressmen were glad enough of this new development. Not the least of the gains from this adventure was the discovery that in the eyes of a great, rich, and independent Power like China the European kingdoms, prone to look contemptuously upon the upstart Republic, no more than were its equals. Moreover, it gave the constituents of Congress a different conception of that opinionated but powerless group of legislators. Here was a case in which being an American was more serviceable than being a Massachusetts man or a New Yorker. When, almost immediately after, Pennsylvania and New York passed protective legislation in favour of the China trade, even the most determined states' rights man began to see that Federal legislation to the same end would be even more beneficial. Thus the little body of men interested in the prospects of the Far East became a potent influence in building up the sentiment in favour of union under an effective constitution. There is ample evidence that both Hamilton and Madison, who between them pretty well wrote the Constitution, foresaw the possibilities of this commerce and were anxious to encourage it. But for the moment, such political recognition as the Continental Congress could bestow was comprised in the appointment of Samuel Shaw as consul to Canton, without emoluments. This was the beginning of our consular service.

All this notwithstanding, the expectations to which this plunge into the enchantments of the East gave rise were remarkably free from mystical nonsense. The sober calculations of ways and means to turn a penny here and a penny there between Canton and New York were well founded in themselves and justified in the results. That immense stimulus to the imagination which has so often come from the impact of the East upon the West was for the time almost wholly lacking. There was

just a touch of fairy-tale faith in Shaw's enthusiastic account of the manner in which a wild, neglected plant in America had played open sesame to storehouses as closely locked as Ali Baba's.

Whatever romance there was in this interchange of goods lay chiefly in the curious value which ginseng had for the Chinese. To the eye of truth all substances look alike. It is the imagination of man that is the true alchemist. And so a bit of root no more notable in itself than a radish, having travelled half around the world in a Yankee brig, found itself on landing in Canton suddenly endowed with all the powers of Solomon's jinn.

Since the cures that ginseng effected were purely imaginary, it had gathered to itself a wide range of medicinal properties which were never subjected to the disconcerting measurement of fact. Its care and preservation were worthy of its great powers. Nowhere is the capacity of the Chinese for doing what they do with perfect finish better exemplified than in the packing and preparation of ginseng. Lockhart, who was a medical missionary in China, later tells us of his visit to a ginseng merchant. Ceremoniously opening a large box the merchant removed several paper parcels which seemed to fill the box. Under them were two smaller boxes surrounded by many other paper parcels. These parcels "contained quicklime for the purpose of absorbing any moisture and keeping the boxes quite dry, the lime being packed in paper for the sake of cleanliness. The smaller box which held the ginseng was lined with sheet lead; the ginseng, further enclosed in silk wrappers, was kept in little silken-covered boxes. Taking up a piece he would request his visitor not to breathe upon it or handle it; he would dilate upon the many merits of the drug and the cures it had effected." When the ginseng was given to friends as a valuable present it was usually accompanied by "a small beautifully finished double kettle, in which the ginseng is prepared as follows. The inner kettle is made of silver and between this and the outside vessel, which is a copper jacket, is a small space for holding water. The silver kettle, which fits

on a ring near the top of the outer covering, has a cup-like cover in which rice is placed with a little water. The ginseng is put in the inner vessel with water. A cover is placed over the whole, and the apparatus is put on the fire. When the rice in the cover is sufficiently cooked the medicine is ready and is then eaten by the patient who drinks the ginseng tea at the same time." Ginseng is still grown on our prairies to market in China.

Thus in the conjury of human relationships is one man's weed converted into another man's medicine.

## 2

If any apology is necessary for ignoring the larger political aspects of the period we are considering, and expatiating upon such simple ventures as one by one followed in the wake of the *Empress of China* until the entire volume of enterprise burst into national bloom, let this be our plea—that by listing only grand undertakings one minimizes what is really remarkable in that day. Much that is good in the development of American democracy lies in the determination of the people at that time to get a sound economic foundation for their families individually, whether they had a government or not. Jefferson even went so far as to say that if he were to decide "whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I would not hesitate for a moment to prefer the latter." Politically they were largely anarchists, inclined to a minimum of governmental machinery. As John Ledyard put it when, as a student at Dartmouth College, he was upbraided for his infraction of a college rule, laws were no doubt excellent things in themselves, but he was at a loss to determine why they should apply to him. It was this spirit of dissident but enlightened self-interest that, regardless of fears and obstructions, sent Ledyard with Cook around the world. This spirit was ready to send Ledyard across the American continent alone with only "a dog, a hatchet, and a pipe" for equipment. This spirit was sending little vessels like the *Experiment* into every water of the globe.

The *Experiment* was a sloop of eighty-four tons' burden which sailed from New York in 1785, direct for Canton. It was the second venture from America, and can no more be omitted from the biography of America than may the first ventures from the life of a man. The enterprise began with a friendly gathering of merchants at the Coffee House in New York. They found that it would require at least fifteen merchants, each staking \$5,000, to purchase and fit out a vessel. Being doubtful as to whether they could find so many, the originators inserted a clause in the agreement to the effect that should they fail to find the full quota the signatories would be absolved from further obligation.

The agreement read in part as follows: "It being presumed that an advantageous adventure may be made to China if undertaken with prudence and managed with economy. . . . Now in order to give vigour and insure success, it will be necessary to establish funds for the purpose of providing such a cargo." To prevent jealousies and to remove every cause of "distrust" it was to be a joint profit affair. Among the names of those who embarked upon this speculation were Peter Schemerhorn and John Vanderbilt, the latter having against his name "Two Shares." The captain, Stewart Dean, also signed. The records (presented to the New York Historical Society by Edward W. Leight, April 10, 1838) were kept on bits of paper—discoloured, tattered, in crude script, like the arithmetic problems of a careless schoolboy.

In the New York *Packet* for October 20, 1785, appeared an advertisement for

#### GINSENG

A Quantity wanted to purchase by Constable, Ruckey & Co.

Of this root the *Experiment* took a thousand pounds valued at \$5,600. For want of merchandise they took \$40,000 worth of Spanish "pillar" dollars. To feel out the market they loaded about \$75 worth of "furrs, squirrels, black, red, and flying squirrels, minks, red fox, and grey, wild cats, marlin, bear, raccoon, muskratts, spotted fawns." Still, small as this cargo

was, the sloop was crowded; and in consideration of the use of his cabin, Captain Dean was allowed \$500 additional perquisites.

The reader who has felt the sliding of a modern ocean liner quietly, easily away from the pier, felt the gentle inward tugging, felt also the sense of release and security in captain, iron ship with steam heart, and a route as well-marked as that of a trolley on Broadway—that reader will pause for a moment with Captain Dean and his crew as they slipped their moorings that gray December day to weather a world full of every possible disaster known to man. All he had to guide him was a chart and sailing directions which had been bought for him for £16.16.0 “to and from the Indian Ocean.” All he had to comfort him were the instructions of his owners. These were simple. Their main virtue was the confidence they showed in the captain. He was to make great speed, to avoid the treacherous natives of Java, and to mail three copies of his invoice—two on separate vessels back home and one to London. “On your arrival, you are to dispose of your cargo to the best advantage and should you happen to be the first American vessel in port, the sale of your ginseng is most particularly to be attended to. . . . In that case, it will be advisable to embrace the first opportunity which you think sufficient advantage to all concerned.” That was all. Thus was an “advantageous adventure” undertaken “with prudence and managed with economy.”

The agreement had been signed on the 22nd of October, but the *Experiment* did not sail until the 15th of December. On December 26, 1775, the New York *Packet* published the following account of the expedition:

“On the 18th instant the SLOOP EXPERIMENT, Stewart Dean, Esq., commander, sailed from hence on a voyage to Canton, in China. This is the second adventure from the United States of America to so distant a port.—It cannot but give pleasure to every friend of his country when it is considered that there are among us men of judgment to plan, and souls of enterprise to execute what formerly would have been considered both a

hazardous and impracticable undertaking. Experience, however, has taught that fancy oftentimes paints danger in much stronger colours than what is found to exist in reality, and that by diligence and activity we are enabled to get over difficulties, which, on a cursory view, are deemed insurmountable.—The Empress of China was considered a very small vessel to encounter the perils of so long a voyage, and yet the Empress of China returned in perfect safety, though the navigation was novel to every person on board—a very small sloop of not more than 40 tons, the property of an enterprising merchant, has twice, without the least loss, visited the Cape of Good Hope; and in the route to China, no part of the ocean teems with more danger than from hence to the Cape. It is reconcilable, therefore, both to the maxims of prudence and the probability of profit, that a sloop, built of the very best materials, fashioned according to the most approved model, navigated by such experienced a commander, and loaded by citizens of approved judgement and competent fortune, should proceed on a voyage which a few years ago, was supposed impracticable.—We wish success to the undertaking, and we wish also that our Legislative body, at their next meeting, may consider the importance of this branch of commerce, and make such regulation respecting it as may insure a certain as well as a permanent advantage to this rising empire. To accomplish so desirable an end, it is only necessary, to encourage the cultivation and proper curing of ginseng, to prevent its exportation to any other country than China, (and that in our vessels) and to impose a heavy duty on the produce of the east, unless imported directly from thence in ships which are the property of the citizens of the United States.—By the *first* regulation, we shall soon be enabled without the aid of specie to receive in return every *necessary* oriental commodity; and by the latter, the profits of this lucrative trade will rest entirely among ourselves.”

For a year and a half the seven men and two boys manned that frail little craft, returning to New York with tea and chinaware. Reference to the scraps of paper gives us some

inkling of what prudence and economy meant to these people, as exemplified by the following accounting:

Sloop Experiment, original cost, fitting, cargo and all . . . . .	£20,000
Sales in Canton . . . . .	25,055
Cargo purchased in Canton . . . . .	21,000
Sales in New York . . . . .	30,300
Profits for two years (near 40%) . . . . .	\$10,529

That New York should have been the first to launch forth upon the China trade was natural enough. The kinship of New York with the Indies, though perhaps illegitimate, was none the less direct. It was a treasure hunter, en route to China, who first discovered the now opulent isle of Manhattoes. "This country was first found by the Dutch in the year 1609," writes Van Der Donck, "when a ship, the *Half Moon*, Hendrick Hudson, commander, was fitted out by the East India Company to seek westward the passage through to China." The *Half Moon* ran aground in the mud off Albany still believing itself in a Chinese port. But when Hudson returned with more certain information that he had failed to find a short route to the Indies, the Dutch East India Company swallowed its disappointment, content that the Amerindians there had never before seen such delightful trinkets as Hudson showed them.

The metamorphosis of New Amsterdam into New York only augmented this relationship with India. The cocky gentlemen of the British East India Company became frequent visitors, and for years its ships discharged their splendour of uniform at the Battery to parade the cobblestone streets and to ogle those plump, simpering, many-skirted Dutch girls, busy with pail and scrubbing brush on the cleanly front stoeps. "Their uniform," we are told, "in the case of a commander consisted, when in full dress, of a blue coat, black velvet lappels, cuffs and collar, with bright gold embroidery as little expensive as may be; waist-coat and breeches of deep buff. The buttons were of yellow gilt metal, with the company's crest; cocked hats; side arms to be worn under the coat, and black stocks or neck cloths; while the undress consisted of blue coat with lappels, black collar and cuffs, waist-coat and breeches deep buff, and buttons similar to the full dress suit."

Holland had hoped to find a short cut to the Indies where the flag of the Netherlands has been floating since 1610. After the Revolution, New York was still more than half Dutch and doubtless in the minds of many of these old burghers there lurked a half-repressed regret that it had not remained Dutch long enough to have obtained a foothold in Java. This may explain the special stress on the dangerous Javanese in the instructions to Captain Dean. Thus pleasure-loving New Amsterdam, which Boston expected of a certainty to go straight to perdition, had already known the delights of wearing silk. Benjamin Franklin had even tried to introduce sericulture into Pennsylvania, but the Revolution interrupted his plans. He had playfully suggested that the Emperor of China was contemplating the "exchange of raw silk for wool, to be carried in Chinese junks through the Straits of Magellan." But it was frugal New England, needing little of luxury itself, that in the end piled up its golden hoard by supplying the doomed Dutch and all those who fell for their wives with the means of their further undoing.

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## CHAPTER III

### WHEN INDIA WAS A NEW REGION

ON THE way home from Canton Major Shaw had met at the Cape of Good Hope another American ship, the *Grand Turk* of Salem. She had been sent out by Elias Hasket Derby of Salem, then the greatest shipowner in America, to scout for information about the India trade. For Salem was almost the only American town whose maritime power had increased during the Revolution. From the earliest time the men of Salem, from father to son, had "followed the sea; a gray-headed ship-master in each generation," says Hawthorne of his own family, "retiring from the quarter deck to the homestead, while a boy of fourteen took the hereditary place before the mast, confronting the salt spray and the gale which had blustered against his sire and grandsire." Before the Revolution, the town had been almost entirely sustained by the West India Trade; during the Revolution, the trading vessels were converted into privateers by the initiative of Derby, a young West India merchant. During the later years of the Revolution he began to think of the possibility of trading in the East Indies, and commissioned Thomas Barstow to build the *Astrea* for that purpose, though meanwhile she was to serve as a privateer.

At the end of the war Salem was an independent little maritime state, self-sufficient and lordly on its small sea-girt peninsula, a viking settlement with all its roots in the sea. There were only eight thousand people in the community before 1790, and all of them poor by present standards and unlettered, without even Boston's good habit of going to Harvard. When the China trade began all they possessed were some wooden houses of square and homelike simplicity and some good brigs and schooners. Within twenty years Salem was the richest and most distinguished city on the American continent. Some

years later Harriet Martineau declared it to be the richest city of its size in the whole world. When the War of 1812 began, it was already a port to be ranked with Genoa and Venice among those cities which, holding the gorgeous East in fee, won from it not spices and jewels only, but the full drama of a rich and strange life.

Yet the achievements of Salem, in those days, when, as Hawthorne wrote, "India was a new region, and only Salem knew the way thither" are something to be celebrated in and for themselves. For, though they were the most spectacular of our Eastern ventures they were also of the least moment in the national development. Salem merchants persisted in going to Canton by way of the Cape of Good Hope, and the road of destiny for Americans pointed the other way, by Ledyard's path, westward by land and sea. Nevertheless, in the stimulus to the imagination, and through the imagination to more daring and hopeful effort, Salem played her part, both through the magnificence of her merchant life and the bizarre and wild adventures of her individual seamen.

## 2

On its first voyage, the *Grand Turk* had not gone beyond the Cape. But almost immediately after the *Empress of China* returned, the *Grand Turk* was dispatched on a second voyage all the way to Canton. The problem of getting an adequate cargo for China was solved by Derby through skilful use of the Yankee art of peddling.

He collected, by means of many coastwise voyages and numerous small exchanges, a cargo which would be welcome eastward and southward from Gibraltar, supplementing this with the best fruits of some more extensive ventures in the Baltic and the Mediterranean. When the *Grand Turk* was thus filled and duly examined by everyone in Salem who had a sound nautical judgment, he dispatched her for Canton by way of the Cape of Good Hope. She peddled all the way, in a meandering course around Africa and through the maze of Far Eastern islands, till, after four or five complete turnovers of cargo, she



*The Grand Turk of Salem initiated the far-flung art of peddling  
the fruits of the Yankee kitchen in the Far East*



arrived at last with a lading of silver earned en route, to be invested in the coveted silks and teas.

It was a great day in Salem when the China goods from the *Grand Turk* were offered at auction. Governor Hancock himself, who always contrived to give a royal air to any occasion he graced, drove down with his lady, once the charming Dorothy Q. of Revolutionary romance. And for days afterward the ladies of Salem, drinking tea that had come by the *Grand Turk* out of fine blue china cups similarly imported, and passing round preserved ginger that had come with the same, considered how full the skirts of their new dresses of Canton crêpe ought to be, and the true and proper draping of the new silk shawl so exquisitely perfumed with sandalwood.

By 1788 Elias Derby was undertaking his fifth East India voyage, and the peddling keels of Salem were out all over the seas. The *Grand Turk* had doubled the capital with which she started, and justified in Derby's own eyes the plans he had laid for the capture of the Indian trade. The careful, extensive plans for fitting out the *Astrea*, typical of the provisioning of ships in those days, show how European trade was stimulated and made possible by the needs of the Oriental markets.

Six months were allowed for fitting out the vessel. A ship was sent in the spring to the Baltic for iron, and a schooner to Madeira for wine, while letters were addressed to correspondents in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore for ginseng and specie. Nor were home products overlooked. Farmhouses, fishing smacks, and workshops were combed for spermaceti candles, salmon, butter, women's shoes, handkerchiefs, tobacco, and when the *Astrea* sailed she had aboard even a phaeton and harness. Most of these things would be disposed of for specie long before she reached Canton. There she was free to buy in the open market for ready cash.

Her return cargo was no less wisely chosen nor less carefully stowed. Every inch of space was used to the utmost advantage, even the captain's cabin. How this was done is graphically told by a later China captain. "A ship of the usual model was floored off with shingle ballast, carefully graded, the tea boxes

were stripped of the rattan bindings and stowed so closely by Chinese stevedores that a mouse could scarcely find lodging between them, and all spaces between beams and car-lines were filled with small mats containing cassia. The silks and crêpes were generally stowed under the main hatch in what was called the 'silk room,' a space between the tea chests left vacant for the purpose. The cases of camphor and oils were stowed on deck . . . covered by a well-secured mat-house, under which, as I can vouch from an experience of two passages, live the carpenter, the cook, and sometimes two boys."

Derby was by no means alone in this course. Ten Salem vessels of different ownership touched at the Isle of France in 1789. Other prominent merchants like William Gray, George Peabody, and the Crowninshields joined in the trade. The five Crowninshield brothers at one time were all out at sea, each in his own vessel, three of them on East India voyages. By 1790, a number of brigs were coming into Salem from the East, three arriving during the early part of June, laden with "tea, silks, spices, and nankeens." These three cargoes were valued at \$9,783.81, \$16,312.98, and \$27,109.18 respectively. Of the other fourteen ships that entered the port during the same period from Europe and the West Indies, the highest recorded value for any one of them is \$323.93; most of them were worth less than half that amount. The comparatively great wealth represented by the new Far Eastern trade is obvious.

By 1790 Salem had already taken all the seas of the world for its dominion, and the wealth of the Indies, even to its last concealing place by land or sea, for its spoil—*divitiis Indiæ usque ad ultimum sinum*—as the old city motto reads.

The new wealth was quickly reflected in the enlargement of curiosity and desire throughout the town, the widening of the provincial consciousness to embrace the world, the discovery of a thousand ways to brighten Puritan life. By 1796, Captain Gibaut had private orders from his friends in Salem to the amount of \$4,000 to invest in the "little elegancies of life," writes the Reverend Doctor Bentley, the clerical scribe of the town, whose diary is a little peephole into the domestic and

feminine side of this trade. "So rapid are our strides to wealth and luxury," he remarks. The little elegancies of life are elsewhere specified—red carnelian necklaces, camel-hair shawls, preserved ginger, Canton crêpe, willow ware. Even the children sent their pennies with the captain, perhaps for a little carved Chinese toy, or lichee nuts, or nests of gay boxes, or a fine bunch of bananas all one's very own. Nor was there wanting some scholarly curiosity, for one man asked for a Sanscrit Bible.

The things which the necromancy of the Far Eastern pedlars converted into the "little elegancies of life" were often, in their first incarnation, humble farmhouse products—salted fish and meat, butter and cheese, ploughs, wagons, wheels, barrel staves, kegs, nails, etc., together with tobacco and ginseng. The salted fish could be exchanged for sugar and molasses on the Spanish Main, and so serve as a medium for further negotiations. The butter and cheese met the need of many an island settlement where these things are still luxuries, imported now from Australia. The wagons, ploughs, and barrel staves were welcome in South Africa and elsewhere among new colonists who could profit by the skill and invention of the American pioneers.

Although, in the beginning, Salem, like other American cities, aimed for Canton, the tropical route brought her ships in contact with India, and Calcutta soon came to be, in the mercantile memories of Salem, what Canton was to Boston. In the Peabody Museum in Salem one may see life-size mannikins of coloured clay or carved wood, representing Hindu merchants, dressed in real turbans and tunics of white muslin. These are portrait statues of Calcutta merchants with whom the Salem merchants had dealings, sent by way of greeting and compliment, as to-day one would send a photograph.

### 3

Although Salem had begun with miscellaneous peddling, she speedily uncovered mines of Eastern wealth which became peculiarly her own. In 1798, Jonathan Carnes, calling at the port of Bencoolen, heard that pepper grew wild on the northwest

shore of Sumatra. When he returned he whispered the news to Jonathan Peele—whereupon Peele, keeping a close mouth all the while, fitted out the schooner the *Rajah* and sent her to the Far East under the command of Carnes. Eighteen months later Carnes sailed into Salem harbour with a cargo which proved to be almost as precious as that fine gold dust with which Solomon is said to have powdered the hair of his gentlemen-in-waiting. All Salem, gaping and sneezing from end to end of Derby Street, was agog to know the whereabouts of this pungent Dragon's Hoard. More than one supper table in Salem became a secret council table where merchants and captains debated means of satisfying their curiosity. When one night the *Rajah* again slipped her cables under the cover of darkness and glided away noiselessly, with muffled 'lights, out of the surrounding shadows swooped one or another waiting schooner, owned by the rival merchants, borne close on her heels by the wind that carried her out. Across the Atlantic they tracked her, and southward to the Cape of Good Hope, and up the other coast of Africa past Madagascar and Mauritius, and that spot in the still, burning Indian ocean, where Salem men were accustomed to turn off to Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras; past the booming shores of Ceylon, and across the dreamy waters that lead to Java, and they chaperoned her, still watchful, into the harbour of Bencoolen. Then one morning they woke to find that the intense calm light of the tropical dawn upon those waveless seas no longer made luminous the one sail they had followed like a beacon light half around the world from Salem harbour; and where she had gone, in all that lush world of jungle and still salt water, no one would undertake to say. So back they went to Salem, with their tails between their legs, so to speak, prosaically laden with tea. And found the *Rajah* there before them, she and her pepper, exasperatingly triumphant. Jonathan Peele was now a rich man.

Such secrets are not kept for ever. The contagion Jonathan Peele had caught on a germ of pepper soon infected some of his friends and neighbours also. Henceforth Sumatra was

added to the Far Eastern dominion that already included India, and news of the depredations of the Algerian corsairs was henceforth agreeably varied with the spirited adventures of Salem men among the Malay pirates.

Nor was this the only kind of treasure Salem appropriated for her own. There was the coffee of Mocha, which might mean being slain out of hand by a Mohammedan villain, or dying as a castaway in the wilderness where the children of Israel thirsted. And there was the sea-slug of the South Sea Islands, which by a roundabout method might also answer to the Midas touch. For sea-slugs, or *bêche-de-mer*,<sup>1</sup> were one of those tasteless gelatinous delicacies like sharks' fins, which Chinese mandarins enjoy—the kind of food they will still serve you in dinners of twenty-five courses at some great restaurant in Shanghai, even though your mandarin host now presides at the table in a tuxedo and takes you home in his limousine.

When the Americans found *bêche-de-mer* among the South Sea Islands they were not above turning aside to do a little service to the mandarins' cuisine. This added cannibals to the folks Salem knew by way of trade, and Frederick O'Brien's lady-loves, the fair brown girls of the Marquesas, whom some susceptible son of the Puritans pronounced to be as much more beautiful than the Hawaiian girls of whom the Boston sailors were always talking as those Hawaiian girls were lovelier than African negresses.

## 4

The reaction of the Oriental commerce on the social life of Salem was very different from that of the Far Eastern com-

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<sup>1</sup>*Bêche-de-mer* (or sea-cucumber as it was called because of its shape), like sandalwood, was in great demand at Canton. This little creature is from six to fifteen inches long and lives on the coral reefs. Sometimes it has prickles on it, sometimes teats, and sometimes it is smooth. It is a very important part of Chinese diet, the process of curing being by boiling it for twenty minutes, then drying it in the sun. Later it is smoked over a fire. When cooked in soups it is most agreeable and nourishing. The favourite variety is the "brown with teats," but the other four kinds—large black, small black, red-bellied, and white—are also edible. The brown-teat fish or slug fetches even to-day as much as \$1,200 or more a ton.

merce in the larger ports. However the energy of the metropolitan communities was stimulated by contact with the Orient, their social history remains essentially that of the rising bourgeoisie all over Europe. In cities like New York and Philadelphia the world-wide commerce and industry might make for hardiness and venturesomeness among those actually engaged in its hazards, and for splendour and refinement among the few capable of digesting its benefits and turning them into the substance of a cultivated life. But between these two—the men who buffeted the waves and the second and third generations of those in whom new seeds of beauty might come to flower—there was a world of people enjoying the secondary contact with the new enterprise, in whom its immediate fruits were far less lovely. Hence there came that generation of pasty-faced clerks in the counting-rooms, and stupid fathers forcing dullard sons through Harvard and Columbia, and plain middle-class families bringing up daughters to show off only a few accomplishments and delicate pruderies in lieu of honest housewifery; hence came the taste for the rococo in household art, and pseudo gentility in social manners, and all the horrors of early Victorianism which were less the fault of the good queen across the water than of the new capitalism and wealth all over the world raising the mediocre mass to mediocre affluence too suddenly, and hence into self-assertion and foolish striving.

Most of this Salem was spared. The life of Salem remained on a level more primitive and more heroic, unique even in that time, and its daily annals partake rather of the nature of balladry and folklore than of bourgeois history. It did its business from the quarter-deck and the captain's walk, and a rich man, retiring with his Oriental earnings from the master's cabin to a great mansion on Chestnut Street, may have carried the "manners of the quarter-deck into his Adam parlour," as Morison suggests, but he carried no second-hand incrustations of false art and "faint fashionable fiddle-faddle, and feeble court slip-slop." Square, solid, and handsome, built like good ships to weather the storms of time, decorated with porcelain and silks and fine carvings which their owners brought from the

East, the mansions of old Salem merchants bear witness to this day to the type of men they housed.

But the brick and timber that a man, through his money, leaves behind him are the reflection of the artistic genius and culture for which he is responsible only vicariously. What of the immaterial substance of his personality? Of this there is the record of his contemporaries. "Derby had now risen to great affluence, at a time when wealth was rare; but while he allowed his family all the comforts of life, he had no love for display. If he ever evinced any pride, it was his long continued habit of assembling his seven children and their families every Saturday afternoon at his farm, and after spending a pleasant afternoon with them, of riding back in a long procession to Salem—the elder taking the lead," says Hunt, the biographer of the merchants.

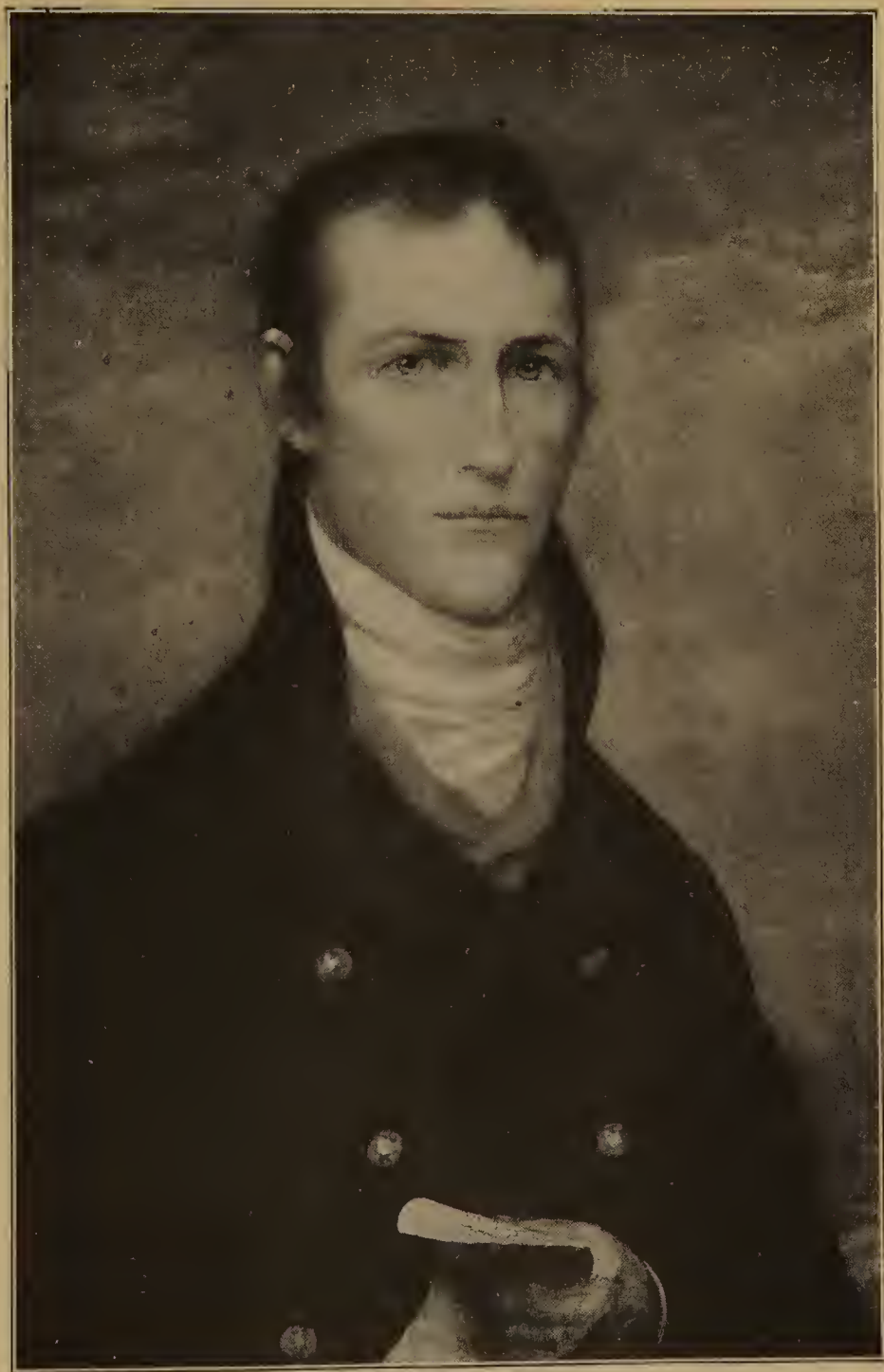
"They speak of Fayal and the Azores as if they were close at hand," wrote Harriet Martineau later, of these Salem merchants. "The fruits of the Mediterranean are on every table. They have a large acquaintance at Cairo. They know Napoleon's grave at St. Helena, and have wild tales to tell of Mozambique and Madagascar, and stores of ivory to show from there. They speak of the power of the king of Muscat, and are sensible of the riches of the southeast coast of Arabia. Anybody will give you anecdotes from Canton and descriptions of the Society and Sandwich Islands. They often slip up the western coast of their two continents, bringing furs from the back regions of their own wide land, glance up at the Andes on their return; double Cape Horn, touch at the ports of Brazil and Guiana, look about them in the West Indies, feeling almost at home there, and land some fair morning in Salem and walk home as if they had done nothing remarkable."

The daily annals of Salem are less magnificent. But they have the naïveté of some old *chansons de geste*; and what no doubt served for tea-table gossip then at this distance makes extraordinarily good reading for the scholar. For instance, on December 26, 1790, Captain Gibaut brings home a native of Madras, and his sombre and haughty dark face under the

white turban arouses endless discussion. Has he several wives at home, and must they all burn themselves alive on his funeral pyre when he dies? And as for this matter of wife burning (which had always a unique fascination for the descendants of witch burners) speaking of the Madrassi, there are not a few people around Salem who can tell all about it. "Had information concerning the Coromandel Coast and Bengal from Captains B. Crowninshield and Gibaut," writes Doctor Bentley later on. "The first testifies that he saw the funeral of a husband in which the wife was consumed. She was feeble, led round the pile by Brahmins, appeared wild, and was suspected of taking opium. The fire was quickened by brimstone, etc., and the ashes swept into the river. She was very young."

Well, but life is a violent affair at best, and death hardly worse, not only in the Orient, but among the Salem men who go out to the Orient. From his recondite inquiries into Hindu iniquities, Doctor Bentley must turn to bury poor Tom, a sailor, and "Tom kept it up till the last breath, swearing, raving, praying, and *the last came in only by the edges.*" While we are on this solemn subject let us drop a tear for poor young Mr. Cotton, another of Doctor Bentley's parishioners, dead of a fever in Batavia: "He and Mr. Smith were adventurers in the service of the India merchantmen upon high wages. The one has paid with his life, and the other gives but poor recommendation to such employment. He asserts that he has buried twelve of his crew, and that he was sick in person nearly five months." Not to mention that sinister captain who is reported to have returned a third time with the loss of all his crew. . . .

On April 23, 1793, Salem has something else to talk about. This same Captain Gibaut, who contributed so much to the edification of Salem, has met with a unique disaster. While he was on a trading voyage between Madras and Pegu, the King of Pegu took possession of his Yankee brig, and proceeded to use it to transport his own naked brown troops to Siam, holding Captain Gibaut and his officers as hostages the while. It is, says the *Salem Annals*, piously, "a case where Might trampled on Right." One is relieved to know that Right, in the person



*Jacob Crowninshield of Salem, who with his four brothers  
commanded vessels all at the same time in Indian seas*



of the dashing captain, was released at last, and brought back all those little elegancies of life safe and sound. On February 25th a Salem brig is taken by the Algerian pirates, and eleven men held in captivity. In August of the same year Daniel Saunders arrives, miraculously saved from death after incredible sufferings in the Arabian desert, the record of which survives to this day in salt and bitter concreteness, beyond the emulation of art. On January 25, 1795, the townsmen of Salem, being still in the hands of the corsairs, there is a town meeting to discuss means of releasing them, Derby and Gray leading the subscription of money for ransom. In 1796, Captain Jacob Crowninshield brought home a seven days' wonder—an elephant, from Bengal, the first that ever appeared on the American continent. The elephant was visited by Doctor Bentley, and his eyes, nose, and inches, down to the last wrinkle in his hide, set down for posterity. He proved a valuable cargo, too, almost as good as tea, for they sold him for \$10,000.

Meanwhile Doctor Bentley, whose round face in its fringe of white hair, ruddy above his vestments, may still be seen among the portraits of the Peabody Museum moving among his parishioners day after day, adds to his observations notes as follows. "Note: Pray for Jane. Sick, and her husband at sea. Note: Pray for Mary: Her husband dead, and brother at sea." Through all this spirited record of pirates and captivity and parleys with Oriental sultans, there runs the still sad strain of Doctor Bentley's "notes," like the unheeded dropping of tears. Yet one is glad to think that the "husband at sea" was not always unmindful, on his part. "My heart within me is ashes," confesses one exile, as, by the light of his little sperm-oil lamp, alone in the captain's cabin at night, he writes up his log, injecting, in a crude cipher between his daily bulletins of the weather, something a little nearer his heart. "I want to see my loving wife and press her to my bosom. But oh my days are gone and past, no more to return to me for ever." And again, "Joanna, this is the day that brings to my mind grateful reflections. This is the day that numbers thirty

years of my dear one's life. Oh that I could lie in her arms to-night, and recount the days that have passed away in youthful love and pleasure."

## 5

The gold of Ophir drew other dividends than those of passionate living. The wealth from the Far Eastern trade grew enormously, overtaking and overtopping that of Boston. By 1799 the first American millionaires were moving away from Derby Street, where their front parlours, facing the wharves, came to smell too much of coffee and pepper and their fences always seated a score of small boys waiting to beg bananas from the East Indian crews. In the more aristocratic seclusion of Chestnut Street, they began to build that row of mansions which make this old thoroughfare to this day "the finest street architecturally in America." When Elias Haskett Derby died, in 1799, a millionaire, no one could be found who possessed a fortune sufficient to maintain the great house he had built to please the high-flying daughter of the Crowninshields, who was his wife; and the handsome structure long stood vacant awaiting someone princely enough to step into the shoes of the man Salem had called "King." Not only had Derby procured enough treasure to make for himself a fortune spectacular in those times, and carved for Elias Haskett Derby, Junior, a long and honourable career in India; he had also started a whole tribe of younger men on the road to affluence, and the heavy duties he paid year by year had been of no little value to the struggling treasury of the Federal Government, as, on one occasion, he took some pains to point out to Congress. After his death the East Indian trade continued to flourish, William Gray taking Derby's place as chief owner of East Indian shipping, with George Peabody and the Crowninshields as close seconds. In 1805 there were seventy-three ships and barks, and forty-eight brigs in foreign commerce, of which William Gray owned a fourth.

"Thus after a century of comparative quiet," writes a clerical historian of Salem, "the citizens of this little town

were dispatched to every part of the oriental world, and to every nook of barbarism which had a market and a shore."

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## CHAPTER IV

### BOSTON BEATS A WAY ROUND THE HORN

AUGUST 9, 1790, was the sort of fine summer day which precipitated the citizens of Boston into the water by which they were surrounded. For those were the times when Boston was still of one piece with the ocean. The long green peninsula seemed rather an island than a fraction of the continent; the sea ran up between the streets, seeping into the gardens, turning pasture to sedge-grass and marsh. The wooden houses appeared to stand knee-deep in the water; the crooked alleys paved with beach stone which served for streets all ran down with one accord to the shore; the shops stood on the wharves.

On a hot summer afternoon the inhabitants still further immersed themselves in the waves. The commons was mostly left to the cows that stood idle and ruminant in the shade of the young elm trees. The fine ladies and gentlemen who were accustomed to promenade there in all the dignity of stuffed and powdered pompadour and cocked hat and scarlet cloak were picnicking on the islands in the bay. Men and boys who owned rowboats or sailing boats took advantage of the day to go to sea. A large portion of those who did not were fishing from the bridges, though we have historical warrant for adding that all they would probably catch was a "youthful and inexperienced cod fish of quite trivial dimensions." The coves and inlets were full of the squirming brown bodies of small boys, head over ears in salt water.

Suddenly there was a salute of guns from the sea, an answering salute from the castle and the artillery. A sail! A sail! An important and unusual sail. On it came, white and gleaming, filled with the wind, while the fishing craft and pleasure boats, full of curiosity, flew toward it like a flock of small inquisitive birds. Such citizens as had contrived to remain on

land now rushed down to the wharves, cheering and shouting. The amphibious portion of the population emerged from the deep and climbed dripping on boat and shore to make their huzzas heard. And, in the midst of the shouts, which swelled to an uproar as flag and sails were recognized, the ship *Columbia* came alongshore, laden with tea from Canton, scudding joyously over those very waters in which more than one of the men now looking on had, in the rash days of their youth, helped to brew a cup of tea for King George.

To some of the more thoughtful among those enthusiastic throngs, the return of the *Columbia* after an absence of three years was the solution of a depressing problem. The gossip which speculated upon the news it bore was full of references to names and places which for years had been subjects of skepticism and wild prophecy. Upon the report of success or failure of her venture hung the future of Boston and America in that hopeful infancy of the China trade. These three years showed clearly that American merchants could not hold their own in the China markets without a good substitute for ginseng. Enough ginseng was already laid up in China to provide for all the present and future ills of the Chinese. The illicit communication with the Spaniards proved an uncertain vein of specie for a nation that as yet had no mines of her own to speak of.

Well aware of this inadequacy, with much cause for apprehension, a few Boston merchants had revived the project which had everywhere been rejected—the scheme of John Ledyard. It had happened quite casually, four years after Ledyard had departed for Europe, that Mr. Barrell, a merchant of Boston, had dropped in to chat with his friend Doctor Bulfinch in his old mansion in Bowdoin Square. In the course of their conversation they fell to discussing the volume of Captain Cook's voyages, just issued, which reminded them of the eccentric young Ledyard. He had been right, after all. Here was the same story about furs and mandarins, under the authoritative hand of the great captain himself. The more they talked about it, the more plausible did it now become. A fortune could be made in that triangular trade—to the Northwest coast for furs,

to China for tea, and back to Boston. Others were drawn in till there were six who together subscribed \$50,000—not a small sum at the time—and the expedition was under way. Two vessels were outfitted—the *Columbia* and the sloop *Lady Washington* as tender. The expedition was commanded by Captain Kendrick; the *Lady Washington* by Robert Gray.

The departure of these vessels was the subject of a great demonstration. Friends of the Boston merchants and navigators involved spent Sunday on board, devoting the evening to parting hilarity. At Nantasket Roads the two navigators dropped the merrymakers and turned their prows to the long, lonely, and unknown road that lay before them. They were routed as no other merchantmen had been before. They were to round the Horn of South America and steer cautiously northward. . . .

And now, on this August day of 1790, the *Columbia* returned, unattended. The lively citizenry of the Hub were not without a sense of the dramatic in current history. Though they refused to permit a playhouse in the town, since the stage is plainly the haunt of sin and natural highway of the Devil, they had so keen an appreciation of the theatrical in public life that, year after year, they gave their votes to a governor whose chief virtue was that he and all his doings were a continual public pageant. Little that history might record as important in the annals of the town was allowed to go by without appropriate display. Two years before, while the *Columbia* was at sea, the populace had escorted through the streets the “new ship, *Constitution*,” drawn by thirteen white horses, and had burned the “old ship, *Confederation*” to the accompaniment of hilarious wine-bibbing. A year later the citizens had turned out in a body to walk behind Washington on his big white horse, when the great general came back to Boston as President of the new United States. And now even Governor Hancock, who had thought twice and nursed his gout and sulked a day before he condescended to welcome Washington, whom he regarded as a “foreign potentate,” to the free and independent commonwealth of Massachusetts,

was prepared to honour Captain Gray, the new hero who had come to town. Meanwhile the people would be greatly disappointed if all the persons and wonders on that weather-beaten little ship, together with the person of the dauntless captain himself, were not immediately presented to them in full public parade.

They had their wish. Before the sun began to descend, they saw Robert Gray, his officers, and his men marching up State Street, and side by side with Gray, a figure spectacular enough to satisfy even Boston, the first Sandwich Islander whose joyous dark countenance the eyes of Boston had ever been privileged to see. He wore, says the record, "a helmet of feathers which glittered in the sunlight, and an exquisite cloak of the same yellow and scarlet plumage." This was Attoi, the Hawaiian "prince."

The day ended in feasting and rejoicing. Governor Hancock gave a dinner, in that grand dining room of his which seated sixty people, to Gray and the officers and owners of the ship. Gray told of his adventures—how they had battled through sleet and darkness and floating ice around Cape Horn; how, crawling up the western coast of South America without touching at the Spanish ports, they had with "inexpressible joy" first seen the frowning spruce-crowned cliffs of the Northwest, and amidst the long breakers that foam and roar there continually a big canoe full of Indians came out to greet them, to welcome them with berries and crabs for the scurvy-stricken crew; how Captain Kendrick had been so fascinated with the coast that he had started right in to buy the whole of it from the Indians, and proposed to make himself owner of an estate larger than many a European kingdom; how, on one occasion, some of the men had got into a quarrel with the Indians and had to fight their way back to the ship with pistols; how he had found English and Russian ships on the coast bound on missions similar to his own; and how, in need of refreshments, he had exchanged ships with Captain Kendrick and, loading the *Columbia* with furs, had spread sail for Canton. He told of the soft and sunny shores of the Hawaiian Islands, and the

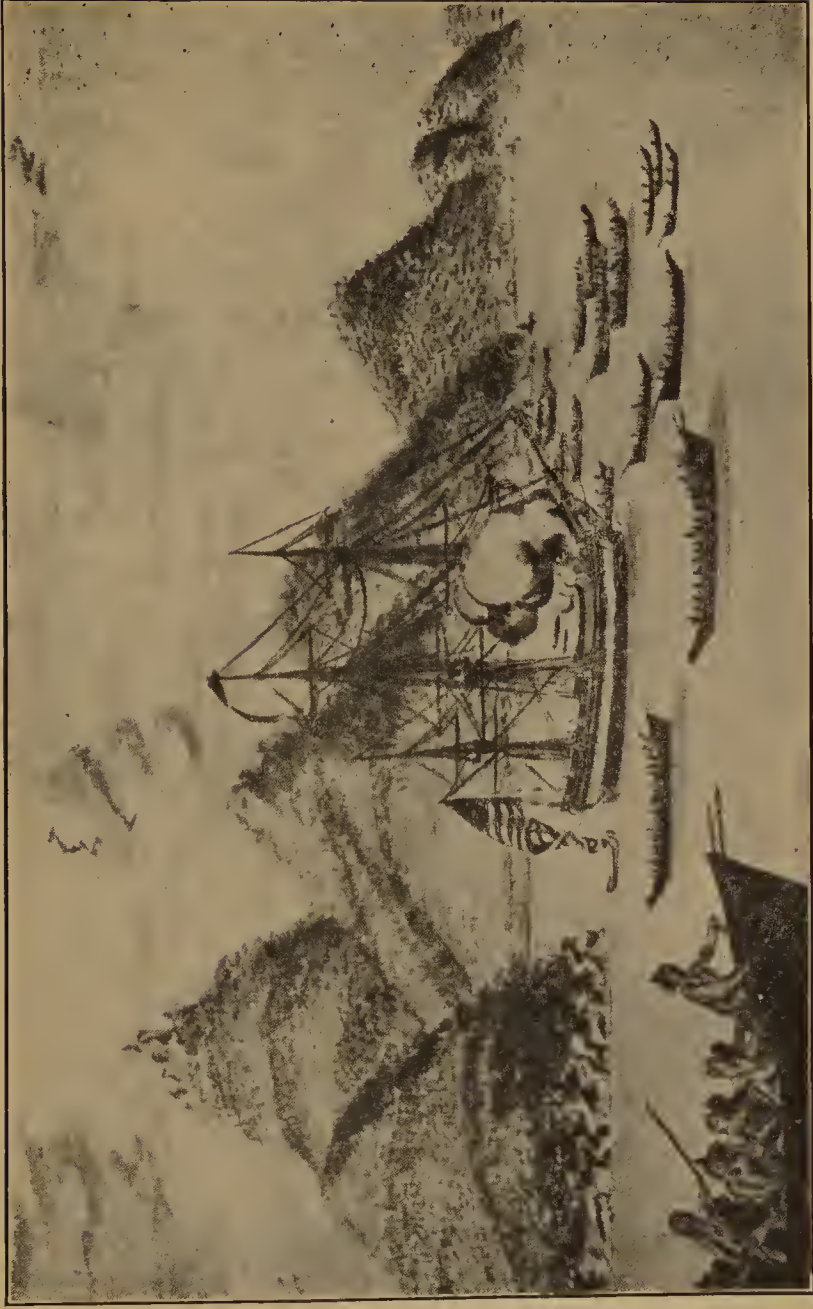
antics of the jolly people there, for this was the first American vessel in Hawaii. At Canton he found that what Ledyard and Cook had alleged was only too true. The Chinese had a perennial need of furs. Their houses were inadequately heated in winter. They were dependent on clothing for warmth, and woollens were practically unknown. Hence all those who could afford it wore great garments lined with furs. Having disposed of his cargo, Gray had turned in the direction of the Cape of Good Hope and home. Thus he had been the first to take an American vessel around the world.

Probably the decorum of the occasion did not prevent some members of the party from throwing more confidential light upon the discoveries in the Pacific, for John Boit, the mate, records that the Hawaiian "females was not very chaste, but their lip pieces was enough to disgust any civilized being. However, some of the Crew was quite partial." Then, by way of refrain, he adds: "Not many of the *Columbia's* crew proved to be Josephs."

In the pauses of Gray's narrative, Governor Hancock navigating his gouty frame around the room in a wheeled chair, from guest to guest, discoursed brilliantly.

It was all very bright and hopeful, even if the owners, casting up accounts next day, found that it had not altogether paid. Despite these financial discouragements, four out of the original six owners recognized the magnitude of the enterprise and immediately fitted out the *Columbia* for a second voyage under Gray. On this second trip Captain Gray discovered the Columbia River, and partially established the American claim to Oregon, a claim that helped to determine that the United States should be bounded on the west by the Pacific Ocean. . . .

How slowly the world moved then. To-day the earth cannot so much as tremble in the dank regions of Africa without our knowing it in the wee hours of the next morning. But then a three years' absence seems to have disturbed people very little. Perhaps even that had its compensation, for, in the case of him who first conceived this far-reaching project, it was



*What though the Indians did look like the troops of Satan, to the scurvy-stricken crew of the  
Columbia their very war songs were hymned*



only a kindness on the part of fate; for at the very moment that John Ledyard lay dying on the sands of Africa, this zetetic expedition was crawling up the western coast of the Americas proving that he was right. He died believing that after all he may have been wrong. Yet when full measure of the Northwest prospect had been taken it was as if, wrote Washington Irving, "a new gold coast had been discovered."

## 2

While the second trip of the *Columbia* was not very much more of a success than the first, it attracted enough attention to make of the Northwest coast the focal point of the mercantile world. After that no year passed without the presence of several Boston brigs in those regions. So natural was the route of vessels in that triangular trade that it is largely followed even in this complex world to-day. Let the modern traveller try to make out a journey for himself off those beaten paths and he will soon find enough irritating delays to take the pleasure out of novelty. Vancouver, or San Francisco, Hawaii, some point in Japan, Hongkong, or Shanghai to-day; then it was Northwest coast, Hawaii, Canton—substantially the same path. European competition gradually fell away. Boston soon predominated even over other American towns. "The trade was confined almost exclusively to Boston," says William Sturgis, later the greatest of the Northwest-China merchants. "It was attempted unsuccessfully from Philadelphia and New York, and from Providence and Bristol in Rhode Island. Even the intelligent and enterprising merchants of Salem failed of success. . . . So many of the vessels engaged in this trade belonged here, the Indians had the impression that Boston was our whole country." For a long time the Northwest seemed to the Americans rather a part of the Oriental than of the Occidental world. For it was separated from Canton only by a navigable sea; but from Boston and Salem by a most unnavigable continent. The ship that beat its way through the tumult around Cape Horn, and found itself running before the trade winds, sometimes without altering a

sail for weeks at a time, with hardly a task for the sailor all day long, felt that it had leaped chaos, and landed safe in a quite different world. The earlier ships from Boston seldom stopped until they had anchored under the great spruce-covered bluffs of Canada.

Starting from Boston in the summer or early fall they would reach the Horn in what is there summer. By spring they would arrive at the Northwest coast with a vessel full of tin-ware, knives, firearms, woollen and cotton cloth. Trade is a humble thing at best, and gains something of dignity from the massing and pooling of great profits. Viewed as a generous interchange of human goods it approaches nobility. If the eagerness of the savage for a nail is amusing to us, our voracious appetite for the skins of wild beasts must have seemed laughable to the Amerindian. The nail at least was man-made; but the fur ran wild. If the amenities of social intercourse between white man and savage were sweetened by civilized molasses, they were likewise perfumed by savage sandalwood or seasoned by Sumatran pepper. So it was not long before the products of our lands were made necessary to the happiness of theirs, and the general standard of human welfare somewhat improved. In the matter of rum and opium, the evils resulting from the traffic were hardly less disruptive in the lands of their origin than in those of their destination. Likewise, even in the human passions, the rankling differences which precipitated strife were mutually destructive and ultimately mutually beneficial. So that while we seem to be stressing the material consequences of this pursuit of wealth, other values cannot be overlooked.

Frequently the sailors came across sea-otters "many leagues from land, sleeping on their backs on the waves, with their young ones asleep on their breasts." As one of those early voyagers tells, softening the harsh record with a touch of compunction, the sea-otter "will not leave her young ones in the hour of danger, and therefore shares their fate." But the Indians soon learned to forestall the Yankees in the cruel business of getting the furs, and almost as soon as the brig sighted land, a big canoe would come pushing off from the shore. The sailors

could hear the war song of the Indians as their canoes hurdled the waves—the chief sitting high in the centre, with his young braves around him, fearful in war paint of red and black, with their heads powdered with red ochre and goose down. “They looked,” says William Sturgis, quoting Milton apropos of the troops of Satan, “fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,” but, as for their war song, they “rattled it off with spirit, quite handsomely.”

The supply of sea-otter skins which the more friendly, covetous, or sophisticated Indians were soon persuaded to barter on sight was supplemented by trading voyages in and out of the coves and fiords of that broken coast. If by fall a full cargo was not obtained, the boats would go to Hawaii for the winter and reappear on the coast in spring. Sometimes, as the demand grew and the number of vessels increased (in 1792 there are said to have been twenty-one vessels under different flags there at the same time), they would have to return for a third season. But as soon as a ship was full she set sail for Canton, where the skins were exchanged for tea, silk, and porcelain, usually, in spite of the heavy dues, at a very considerable profit. Thus laden they would set out by way of Good Hope either for Europe or America. The profits were thus in triplicate; the original outlay quickly doubled, trebled, and often quadrupled. Often the whole original cost of building and equipping and even manning the ship would be met by one voyage, leaving the owner in possession of a fine boat, clear of debt, and a nest-egg besides.

Here is an individual case, showing the multiplication of the profits, which, though written much later, while the ravages of war were going on, was typical of the whole period:

CANTON, JAN. 1, 1814.

“TO MESSRS. PERKINS & Co.

“You say a cargo laid at Canton would bring three for one in South America, and your copper would give two prices back. Thus, \$30,000 laid out in China would give you \$90,000 in South America, one half of which laid out in copper would give one hundred per cent., or \$90,000, making \$135,000 for \$30,000.

“60,000 pounds of indigo even at 80 cents, \$48,000; 120 tons of sugar at \$60, or \$7,200, and cotton or some other light freight, say skin tea, \$20,000, in all \$75,000, would be worth \$400,000 here, and not employ the profits of the voyage to South America. Manila sugar is worth \$400 to \$500 per ton here, clear of duty. The ship should be flying light, her bottom in good order, the greatest vigilance used on the voyage and make any port north of New York.

“(signed) THOMAS H. PERKINS AND JAMES PERKINS.”

A clerk in the Custom House at the port of New York keeping his diary to-day could record imports and exports in such volume as would belittle the whole Northwestern enterprise. Wall Street handles in one day more wealth than was then navigated over the seven seas in thirty years. But such comparisons are puerile. Tyler Dennett tells us that in the first thirty years of the fur trade 1,800,000 sealskins netted in Canton \$3,500,000, and 160,000 sea-otter, \$4,000,000, and that the entire fur trade at Canton from the United States was not more than \$20,000,000, while the exports from the United States to the Indians for the years 1789 to 1817 were \$4,564,000. It would almost seem as though more was paid for the furs than the market yielded at Canton, but that would be overlooking the tremendous profits that accrued from the sale of Chinese products in Europe and America. But one's imagination staggers before the incalculable when one tries to visualize the worth of the Pacific; our states on the coast, our national development, our individual prosperity and the century of prosperity throughout the Pacific and the world that fed upon it. What is pirates' buried treasure compared with the treasure consumed, enjoyed, and even preserved by the millions who have lived and drawn their substance from this source-wealth of the century?

With few careers on land offering more immediate prospects of success and affluence than the sea yielded in those early days, the sea attracted men who in their later achievements

proved that it was not their only resource. It was to them a stepping stone, or lodestone in the alchemy of Oriental trade. And while the fortunes made in the furs and herbs of the Pacific were not very numerous nor in the aggregate very vast, in the unfoldment of character the trade was remarkable to a degree. With but two or three noteworthy exceptions, most of the men who amassed great wealth in this enterprise were themselves captains and supercargoes. It could not but be so. Sturgis, Perkins, Cushing—all down the line we find men who achieved their prominence in the mercantile world because behind their earnings was a knowledge of human nature that ranged from the most primitive to the most cultured; first-hand knowledge of natural sources of wealth in the jungle as well as in the godown; competition with Western shrewdness, Oriental suavity and cannibal naïveté. Business men who in these days “take chances” are playing a game of “heads I win, tails you lose,” compared with the chances that a man took in ordering and purchasing goods in China that might or might not be in demand in New York a year later, or shipping to the Northwest as the only means of securing a profitable cargo of furs a boatload of “notions,” a superfluity of which might have been dumped on the Indians by vessels and nations whose movements he could not have foretold. A merchant had to be a man of the world and of affairs, not merely one who ships on definite order only. One is constantly astonished by the intricacies of enterprise as conducted by a successful merchant in the China trade.

Harsh, brutal, hazardous as the business was, it yet attracted young men to whom the only other alternative was a farm in the wilderness or a nook in a counting-house. John Boit, Jr., at nineteen, took the eighty-four-ton sloop *Union* round the Horn, up the coast to Canton, and home around the world; John Suter began at seventeen and struck the coast at nineteen. John Perkins Cushing at sixteen took charge of his uncle's firm at Canton. William Sturgis was only sixteen when he first visited the coast, and at nineteen took command of a vessel. These youngsters pursued their pelagian enterprise

from Indus to the poles, from China to Peru. Backed by such merchants as Thomas Handasyd Perkins, entrenchment in Canton was secure. But largely that security depended upon the sagacity and quick wit of the young men in the field, and these in time took the trade into their own hands and became the master merchants.

Unknown to themselves, the fur traders were winning a new land in the Northwest. For every Plymouth Rock upon the Eastern main there is a mountain on the Western main. And the stories of human endurance, of tact in dealing with strange peoples, and the lack of it that left skeletons behind, of business acumen that won men fortunes across thousands of miles of sea; of these, in the fur trade alone, there are enough to make volumes.

But volumes and profits do not make life. There on the Northwest coast men lived an unsheltered existence which evoked the worst and the best in human nature. The fate of John Jewitt and the experiences the sailors usually expected and sometimes met with unexpectedly illustrate the nature of the circumstances in the Northwest. Jewitt had been one of the crew of a Northwester. The vessel was attacked by Indians and all but himself and one other massacred. Because of Jewitt's ability as a metal worker, he was spared, but forced to forge weapons for the natives. After several years of virtual slavery, he escaped on a vessel bound for Canton, where he had the good luck to find an old friend who sent him home. His own story, later published, furnished stirring, if somewhat bloody, reading. But the white man as captive slave would be more interesting if his story were told by his captors. In his quest for ease the white man has endured excruciating hardships, demonstrating, in the Pacific enterprises, that he who wishes to win life must be ready to hazard it.

The Indians, however, were, in some cases, no worse than the Asiatics, as the story of William Sturgis and his encounter with the Chinese pirates demonstrates. In 1809, Sturgis as captain of the *Atahualpa* was carrying, besides a lusty cargo, some \$300,000 in specie along the pirate-infested coast of China.

He had been definitely ordered by his owners not to carry any cannon. Knowing the nature of his route, he secretly secured several guns within the hold. Nothing arose to bring these instruments into action throughout the long voyage. At last they arrived safely at Macao Roads. Daniel C. Bacon, the mate, was sent ashore to get a pilot, and everyone on board breathed a sigh of relief at the happy ending of the voyage. Suddenly a whole fleet of Chinese junks was seen moving down upon them in a manner significant of their purpose. Sturgis doubted, but made ready his guns, and when they came too close, sent a warning shot to determine the true intention of the visitors. Their continued advance and reply with fireballs and jingals left no room for doubt. There was little wind to afford a rapid escape, but pretending to stand his ground and give battle, as the pirates tried to close in on him, Sturgis crept inch by inch in the direction of the Portuguese forts at Macao. Shrieking with anticipation of their victory, the pirates, perhaps unwittingly, perhaps in sheer frenzy at the havoc wrought by the guns, continued to let themselves be drawn on. But Sturgis, knowing only too well what capture meant, and feeling uncertain of his ability to reach the forts, announced to his crew that in the event of defeat, he would blow up the ship with the keg of powder beside him. Meanwhile he kept the ship veered landward, where, by now, the whole foreign population, having espied his critical situation, had gathered helplessly. The mate, Bacon, would not be restrained, but immediately set out for the ship. For hours the battle raged. Slowly Sturgis dragged his ship out of the very teeth of the marauders into range of the forts, which threw themselves suddenly into the fray and demolished the surprised fleet. The chief of the pirates, Apootsae, was taken alive and turned over to the Chinese, who imposed their favourite punishment upon him and executed him by "the thousand cuts."

When Sturgis reported the escape to the owners, old man Lyman said sternly, "Sturgis, hadn't we ordered you not to carry cannon?"

## 4

They created a social aura for themselves, the merchant-shipowners, not so much by their wealth alone, their mansions and precious dinners, as by the reach of their conversation. They held the world in their hands. They were the means of creating a world consciousness in the nation that was just then only trying to maintain a grip on its nationhood. Their capital—there were perhaps four millionaires in the trade—was small, but it afforded enough to give industry a push and set its wheels in motion. While men like Joseph Peabody controlled eighty-three ships manned by seven thousand men off and on, and carrying millions of dollars' worth of cargo, their slowly accruing profits could not but give to local manufactories the impetus without which no industry can mature. Our minds are gouty these days with feeding on reports of earnings in oil and speculations in Wall Street, so that we forget there was a time when this land was money-hungry.

Among the men who left a fortune of a million was Thomas Handasyd Perkins, who had been Derby's supercargo on the *Astrea* when Robert Gray arrived at Canton. Perkins even then must have planned to be first in the fur trade. His father was a wealthy merchant, and when he died his mother took hold of the business and proved a century ago that there was nothing masculine about brains, *per se*. Thomas and his brother James established one of the first Boston-Northwest-Canton houses, and Thomas became the patriarch and family centre of a whole tribe of younger China merchants. He was the brother-in-law of the well-known Northwest trader, Russell Sturgis, uncle to two notable China merchants, J. P. Cushing and R. B. Forbes, and grand-uncle to a third, Russell Sturgis the younger. Almost all of these men have left pen sketches here and there of this doughty old uncle of the China trade. In the immediate social group in which he moved, boys somehow absorbed the whole wisdom and experience of the Pacific with every sight of his solid granite face; and when they dined at his board before setting out for China, he would help them liberally to pudding,



*With bristling sail and hissing jingals the Chinese pirates swooped down upon the swan-like ships of the avaricious Occident*



with injunctions to eat plenty of it now as they'd get no pudding so good beyond the Cape of Good Hope. Robert Bennett Forbes said he somehow grew up with the notion that it would be his inevitable destiny to eat bad pudding for ever beyond the Cape of Good Hope. Most of the earlier China merchants who were not related to him by blood or marriage worked for him and in that way learned the complexities of the trade.

Closely associated with the Perkins brothers, in the earlier days, were two brothers of the same Christian names—James and Thomas Lamb. The close coöperation and strong influence of personal friendship that obtained between these men are among the chief characteristics of this field of enterprise. In 1791 James and Thomas Lamb are introducing to a Philadelphia merchant "their particular friend" Mr. Thomas H. Perkins. That year the Lamb brothers united in sending to the Northwest coast the ship *Margaret*, which, in 1792, successfully reached China with a cargo of fourteen hundred skins. Unrelated to Russell Sturgis except by profession was William Sturgis, of whom we have said so much, and he too was working first for one and then for another of these merchants, beginning in the counting room of Russell Sturgis, rising to his first independent command before twenty-one on a voyage for the Perkins brothers, and completing his nautical education on the ship belonging to the Lamb brothers.

After a few years in the Pacific-Northwest-Canton fur trade, Sturgis left the sea. Three years after the adventure with the pirates he wrote to Cushing on February 21, 1812, "You won't be much surprised at my attempt to moralize when you learn that since my last voyage I have settled down as a grave citizen, am married, have a son fourteen months old and a daughter 3 days—am part owner of four ships and three Brigs and going on with business—as little fear of war with Great Britain as with the Great Mogul."

Since there were no typewriters, copies of letters were laboriously entered into ledgers and signed by Sturgis for record. The paper is now discoloured, its ends frayed, but the expressions and reflections of the man live with a mellow sweetness,

Though he went to sea instead of to Harvard, there is a literary quality even in his boyish observations. Flashes of wit and kindness, quotations from Shakespeare, Milton, and Goldsmith, touches of philosophy projecting his whole personality, enliven his most casual correspondence. China was famed for artificial flowers and sweets, but Sturgis gently admonished an agent who had sent too much, with: "Artificial flowers will not do. We like those that grow wild and cost nothing best in this country. As for sweetmeats, we most cordially wish you had to eat a large part of them yourself." Having endured every known hardship in the Northwest trade himself, he was always lenient with his captains and considerate of his crews and kindly in his reflections on Indian life.

The Indians say it is necessary to beat dogs but not to strike a child. And yet children will be children, and mothers sometimes lose patience, as Sturgis himself observed one day when he was trading on this coast. "A woman, with a family of children was alongside of the ship in her canoe, making some purchases; and among other articles she obtained a quantity of molasses which was put in a large wooden tub in her canoe. A little naked urchin, two or three years old, half covered with oil and dirt, made repeated attempts to get at the molasses, much to his mother's annoyance. At length, in a great pet, she caught the child by the arms, and plunged it into the tub, leaving it seated in the viscid substance up to its chin. The child bore the punishment with as much stoicism, and employed himself in the same manner as a young Yankee would have done."

In time he became the wealthiest of the China merchants. He never took an unfair advantage of his competitors, other than to use his special knowledge to their undoing. He never took more than 6 per cent. interest. "It is my habit, my taste, if you please. I always remember a remark which old Mr. Astor once made that the practice of taking usurious interest 'narrered the mind, and 'ardened the 'art.'" (sic) He lived a life of Spartan simplicity and never touched liquor. Though his mansion had the comfort and luxury of a well-ordered home,

no pictures adorned its walls and no sculpture found niches there. In his later life he spent his summers at Horn Pond, on the quiet side of its shaggy coast, where he would take his boat out at sunset alone upon the water, or spend the twilight on the piazza telling stories to his grandchildren.

## 5

All this released the vital currents of industrial life. It did more. It absorbed all the riotous, idle energies of a populace which had grown up in the gospel of rebellion.

"The shipments made by you hitherto have proved lucrative and I predict that you will hereafter be a richer fellow than you ever expected or deserved," wrote William Sturgis to James P. Sturgis on March 26, 1812. "Your old dissipated friends are nearly all gone—some hanged and some luckily died a natural death."

Almost imperceptibly the younger merchants diverted the power from the old Colonial aristocracy to themselves. Under this influx of trade Boston grew busy and it grew sober. It left off its periwigs and lace ruffles and stopped wearing the sword. Out of this bright vision of the Indies there came an influence, soft as a February thaw, insensibly breaking up old enmities, mollifying bitter words, drawing men together in common comfort and prosperity. Even as the New Englanders cursed the new President, Jefferson, they felt the words fall harmlessly from their lips. They could not help it. They were somehow at ease again, and what did it all matter?

The effect of the new wealth was felt in every part of the country, but particularly in the maritime communities. With the rise of men who had been poor to reasonable financial independence, there came not only the sobering influence of work and the rewards of trade. There appeared also a new foundation for democracy in a new habit of mind. It was at this point, when the pinch of poverty began to relax, that the idea of taking actual possession of the Pacific began to play upon the imaginations of men.

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## CHAPTER V

### MONEY AND MANNERS IN PROVIDENCE

THE history of these early years of the Republic is the record less of a nation than of a series of independent city states. The least interesting aspect of this trade is the monetary fortunes involved. Aside from the prowess of the men and the smallness of their vessels, the diversity of urban character strikes one as strangely fascinating. Cautious, far-seeing Derby of Salem had behind him a wild, speculative community that penetrated lonely, unfrequented East Indian isles for pepper and spices, and made for itself a reputation for romance and adventure. With the same possible advantages, no two cities entered the lists in the same manner. Speculative Robert Morris had behind him a cautious, easy-going metropolitanism which later gave Philadelphia twenty years of precedence over New York, Boston, and Salem in safe and steady mercantile business between Calcutta, Madras, and Canton. New London, New Bedford, and Nantucket took to themselves the hunting of the leviathan and the clubbing of seals.

Before we consider the opposition to American maritime development from abroad and the westward trend at home, which were to make of these separate communities one nation, there is one other city which seems to deserve a place of its own in the story. That city is Providence.

Hardly had Providence stopped going to Hartford for its annual feast of salmon when the Revolution gave a turn to her interests that sent her, along with all other maritime cities, to the Indies. Rhode Island, which had hesitated longer than all the other states to ratify the Constitution, nevertheless got ahead of Massachusetts in greeting the new President; for while John Hancock played the malingerer in receiving "the foreign potentate," Washington had already attended

the christening of a ship, *General Washington*, the first from Providence to sail for the Far East. The owner of the vessel, John Brown, had been a vigorous proponent of the Constitution. He and General Varnum had stood foremost with the mercantile interests in opposition to the farmers and mechanics who to the last moment held the state suspended between isolation and union. The General had declared that "the majority of the administration is composed of a licentious number of men, destitute of education, and many of them void of principle. From anarchy and confusion they derive their temporary consequence."

But John Brown was too busy to do much talking. He was digging canals, building wharves and shipyards at what became known as India Point, and was launching that heroic trinity—the *General Washington*, the *President*, and the *George Washington*. "This literally opened a new world for our commerce," says Weeden. "It was prosecuted vigorously and ably in the closing years of the century by his nephew."

While this was indeed the beginning of a new and greater prosperity, it could hardly have been plied so energetically without the affluence that had preceded the Revolution. The Browns had been sufficiently padded against circumstance. The family, beginning with the audacious Obadiah Brown, could add up a tidy little sum of property worth £90,517, significant enough even in our time. That Obadiah trafficked in slaves is merely a matter of economics, for morals, after all, are simply the recognition of man's weaknesses so long as they are universal weaknesses. Possibly slavery was not such a blight as we think. At least the slaves of Providence enjoyed among themselves social distinctions and dispensations—in due proportion, like their masters. So, in accordance with the virtues and customs of his time, Obadiah traded profusely with the West Indies, where the fruits of the Brown distilleries were turned to excellent advantage. "If you cannot sell all your slaves to your mind, bring some home. I believe they will sell well, gett Molasses if you can," wrote James to Obadiah Brown, the self-same James who had enjoyed some altercations with

the law for disturbing his Majesty's peace. And Providence prospered. When, years after, John Quincy Adams gave himself up to speech (as he was so fond of doing) he pronounced the home of Obadiah Brown "the finest house on the continent." From all of which Obadiah, "freethinker" that he was, contrived to distil sufficient compassion for his fellow sinners to toast them thus: "Here's a short respite to the damned in hell."

A picturesque, passionate, restless family it was, this Brown family. Though there is little enough connection, it is nevertheless a strange coincidence that the freethinking grandfather toasting the damned should have a grandson making his last youthful trip before his death in the "good sloop *Freelove*." Be that as it may, the various changes that converted the firm from Brown & Benson to Brown, Benson & Ives, and finally to Brown & Ives were not brought about, the historian tells us, "without heartburning." For when daughter Hope set her heart upon young Thomas Poynton Ives of Beverly, Massachusetts, her father, John Brown, demurred. Ives had family but no funds, and the father erred in making his objections on the grounds of his desire that his daughter should marry a gentleman.

"Father, what makes a gentleman?"

"Money and manners!"

"Well, Father, you have the money and Tom has the manners," said Hope, and discovered that her father had enough manners to waive further objections.

How can one expect a girl's heart to be her own, to be disposed of without the consent of her father, when even casual virtues were ever the concern of the entire community? Were not even legal punishments administered all the way down to 1830 in such a public manner that the "yells of the patient" might all the more firmly impress morals on the masses? While there may be a dearth of records of the domestic and emotional life of the time, not so of these communal checks upon the private virtues and purses. There remains any quantity of inventories of the most sundry possessions, gold and silver buttons, toothpicks, chinaware, "female callico gowns" and

"3 pair trousers 9s," to apprise us of the native welfare. Books are also listed, which while few in number nevertheless assure us that the intellectual pabulum of society was not a small concern of its elders. Men were not timid about wearing their emotions on their sleeves, nor coy about advertising themselves. Hence we learn that plain traders blazoned their callings before their shops with titles by which their patrons might locate them, such as the "grim and frowning" "Turk's Head" or the "Elephant," not to mention the attorney who announced that his office was "near Silas Downer, graduate of Harvard." But so prominent and so distinguished had the Brown establishment become in this intimate community that they spread no sign of their profession over their doors.

In such a world—and it varied little between Boston and Philadelphia—it is not surprising to find that an occurrence like the dispatching of the *Empress of China* from New York should soon have found imitation elsewhere. While in Boston it took the form of a dignified gathering of celebrities who only casually referred to mercantile affairs, in Providence it was a more private, brotherly dispensation of possible advantages. So we find that John Brown addresses "Brother Moses" upon certain business plans he has in mind, just "before I go to the Assembly, next Monday." He is thinking of fitting out the "*Gen'l Washington* to the East Indies in which case shall not be any more concerned in the Ginney Trade." And as one must do as one would be done by, particularly when one has been done by so handsomely already, he now offers Brother Moses the chance of joining in his enterprise. "Thier is a Man by the name of Haley An Englishman that has lived 7 years in India and gives Good Encouragement to send the ship," he tells him. "He will go in her, he has Lately Married in this Country, and appears to be an Intelligable Handed Man."

It is rather striking that on such casual information John Brown should cast off the slave trade and hazard a costly ship and \$60,000 worth of cargo. But the imagination had not for so long been kindled with the vision of the Indies for noth-

ing. Ships just naturally gravitated thither as soon as the Revolution sundered their cables tying them to Britain. Hard, prosaic, thrifty people keeping a record of every pair of pants and every toothpick would not have responded so easily to "Good Encouragement." It had been bred into them and demonstrated too long to need over-much prodding.

Haley had been able to give more than mere encouragement, for the remainder of the letter shows that Brown was familiar with the cargo that would best command the markets of the Indies, and typifies the nature of the trade as later carried on by all ships from Providence. "If she goes she ought to carry a Cargo from £10,000 to £12,000 L. M. value, in Cannon, Shot, Anchors, Barr Iron, Tarr, Ginseng, Medearia Wine, Brandy and Sperits, Jamaica Sperits; Mr. Hayley Ses, but New England Rum made very strong I should think may answer as by the time it gets there will be about as good." The good people of Rhode Island, dissenters from Massachusetts creeds, were, it would seem, as little disturbed in their conscience in the matter of rum as the Puritans and Quakers proved later to be in the matter of sandalwood which was used as incense before idols. Still, one must share that which one has in abundance even with the heathen, though there is something pathetic in the disparity between the things the Christian sent and the Heathen gave in return. "For such a Cargo carried to the Hither Indies," says Brother Brown, "and to take a Freight from there to China she may bring a Cargo home worth £40,000."

Nineteen months later, the *General Washington* returned, after having touched Madeira, Madras, Pondicherry, Canton, St. Helena, Ascension, and St. Eustatius. However much these men may have appreciated their experiences and their goods, they leave solely to our own imaginations the more picturesque results of the voyage. Only one gentleman, a sort of supercargo, assists us. Henry Smith, later acting governor of the state, and the first Grand Sachem of the Rhode Island Tammany Society (one of the "hundred who had not bowed the knee to Baal," i.e., Federalism,) wrote home to his parents

expressing his fears for the success of the venture. Nevertheless, the nine-month voyage netted its owners \$150,000, or a profit of about \$100,000.

At a "Large Vendue" of East India and China goods of "as great a variety as has ever been sold in New England" held on June 8, 1790, the month after the visit of George Washington, the following announcement appeared in a local newspaper: "Flattering ourselves that the great Variety and Richness of the Goods will be an object sufficient to induce Gentlemen from other states to attend the Auction, we would just note, for their Information, that there is the greatest Probability that the Convention of this State, which meets at Newport next week, will adopt the Constitution, whereby every Embarrassment which at present attends the Transportation of Goods from this to the neighbouring States will be removed, so that the Purchasers will be enabled to convey their Goods to their respective Homes, free from any Impediment whatever."

The prophecy was made good, for on the 29th of May, Rhode Island, threatened by Congress with a bill that would have throttled her trade, entered the Union, and Providence, depending on her overseas commerce much more than on the agricultural hinterland, was saved from the necessity of seceding from the state as she otherwise would have done.

During the next sixteen years Providence continued to send ships and build ships and keep in touch with the great wide world, without any exciting event to colour this activity. Four years after her entrance into the Union, Providence again celebrated a national achievement by christening a new ship—the *John Jay*. It was perhaps one of the most outstanding signs of approbation of that illustrious gentleman's ambassadorial qualities, for the treaty he made with England was not too enthusiastically received. In New York, Alexander Hamilton was stoned for defending it. Not a dozen years had passed before the *John Jay* came to regret its intimacy with that jurist, for, the treaty notwithstanding, she was captured by the British and interned at Bermuda for carrying a Dutch cargo to Batavia. For six months she "languished" and was finally

released in 1807. On the stage such incidents represent either farce or dramatic justice. But there was a worse fate in store for the ship. She set out again for the Indies, and in the course of a side trip to a pepper island, she struck a coral reef off Pigeon Island and foundered. Hard as this was on Messrs. Brown, Benson & Ives, they had little to complain of, for she had earned her keep and her reputation substantially. She was only thirteen years old, yet her five or six long voyages had been profitable, to what an extent may be judged from the two available estimates of cargoes she brought back, which alone came to nearly \$600,000.

Meanwhile, the old firm lost a member and became simply Brown & Ives. To celebrate, their new ship was named after the fair ladies whose "lady-in-waiting" she was to become. We remember Hope, she who had judged well of her father's and her lover's attributes. The ship was called the *Ann & Hope* and was the pride of Providence. But her story was even shorter than that of the *John Jay*. While she made as many voyages and perhaps as much money as the other, she did it in only seven years, ending her rash career on the rocks off Long Island with a cargo of \$300,000, of which but an infinitesimal fraction was saved. However, to her credit stands the story of the stirring rescue of a stranded Lascar on an island en route to Canton.

Such was the activity of Providence in the Far East, a trade that was said to involve the exportation of four million dollars in specie every year even before 1797, besides the commodities that filled the bottoms of her ships. Between the merchants at both ends of this trans-oceanic chain there obtained a casual, friendly, easy-going understanding. "Inform Loo Mouqua and Geonqua," they order their captains, as though talking to a merchant at the other end of town, "that you have money to pay our obligations. For balance of loading not paid for, we prefer to buy from China merchants (as in last voyage), they taking the risque to this country. If the Ship is lost, they lose; arriving safe, we send out money for the debt. . . . We owe Loo Mouqua \$8052.50, Geonqua, \$19,949.33, also we

are to pay \$2642 given by Benj. Munro on the last voyage of John Jay. Should the times become settled, we shall send out a further sum of money. We are confident that our ample shipment of funds will give further credit at Canton. This ship must be perfectly full. Break up Nankins (silks) to fill every crevice."

On their part, the Chinese merchants were reaching out across the seas to Providence, for on May 12, 1804, the *Gazette* announced:

"Yan Shinquā, China-Ware Merchant, at Canton, Begs leave respectfully to inform the American Merchants, Supercargoes and Captains, that he procures to be manufactured, in the best Manner, all sorts of China-Ware, with Arms, Cyphers, and other Decorations (if required) painted in a very superior Style, and on the most reasonable Terms. All Orders carefully and promptly attended to. Canton (China) Jan. 8, 1804."

Naturally, this grand intercourse reflected itself in the character of the men engaged in it. We now find Thomas Poynton Ives hailed as the new merchant and man of method for a business which was to link the United States to India and China in an endless chain. John Brown's position had already become too well established for ordinary comment, while great gentlemen of great repute could not overlook him. In his travels in America (1795-97) the Duke de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt passed through Providence and leaves his impression of Brown in no mistakable terms. "The richest merchant in Providence is John Brown, brother to Moses the Quaker. In one part of the town he has accomplished things that, even in Europe, would appear considerable. At his own expense he had opened a passage through the hill to the river, and has there built wharves, houses, an extensive distillery and even a bridge, by which the road from Newport to Providence is shortened at least a mile."

But Providence was destined for another career. She had sent two American consuls to China. Major Samuel Shaw

returned from China in the *Washington* of Providence, and his successor, Samuel Snow of Providence, proceeded hence in the *Ann & Hope*, to be followed in 1806 by General Edward Carington, another resident of that city. Providence could not remain in the overseas trade very long. But in part at least its young men and young women still imbibe what nourishment there may be in that simple though impressive contact, through the medium of Brown University, one of its offspring enterprises.

For fifty years these people, off the beaten tracks of New England and Knickerbocker life, had nevertheless placed themselves squarely upon the highways and byways of the entire world. By 1841 that endless chain snapped and Providence took to spinning and weaving.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE UNDERTOW

**B**UOYED up by their individual successes, the states behind these cities were heading for disintegration. Until 1790 they were without a central government efficient for protecting this widening commerce. To Europe, as pleased with Republicanism as Republicanism is with Bolshevism, the disruptive spirit dominating the Confederation afforded a ray of hope. England saw in it the possibility of gathering the brood under her wings again. So long as there was economic stress and general discontent, every local trait was so much kindling. What bond was there between them? At home, none. Abroad, mutual helplessness. Even after the acceptance of the Constitution, Massachusetts men were pleased to be known on the Northwest coast as "Boston men" rather than as Americans.

As with individuals, so with states, mutual aid is the basis of union. At home men might squabble for ever; abroad their national deficiencies bring them together. A nation can live healthily enough in isolation; but for the graces and the stimulus to better living, a nation must have foreign intercourse just as the individual must have society. Almost at the same moment that the Americans were becoming one nation in spite of themselves and feeling old animosities melt in the new prosperity, they were beginning to see that the very forces that drove them to revolution would drive them again into a war with Great Britain. The War of Independence was primarily a fight with the British East India Company. Hardly was the war over when the agents of the company sought to undermine this new promise of trade in the Far East. Beginning with the intrigue of Phineas Bond in Philadelphia it culminated in a series of aggressions that step by step led inevitably to the War of 1812.

While the British in China, realizing that the advent of a new nation speaking their language might easily be made use of for the furtherance of their interests and mutual advancement, asked Shaw to let bygones be bygones, the British in America, and the French and the Spanish, were doing everything in their power to prevent the adhesion of the states to each other. The most spectacular incident was the machinations of Citizen Genêt. But for invidious intrigue none has left more damning evidence against himself than did Phineas Bond of Philadelphia.

Phineas Bond is the villain of our piece, but since he was, in the end, a harmless one, we may now enjoy the record of his rascality, and thank him for the news his malice leaves us of that far-off time. Although born in America, he had proved himself of doubtful stripe. Charged with disloyalty to the Revolution, he promised to remain inactive in the Loyalist cause and was permitted to go free. But becoming involved again, he absconded to England, and there remained till peace came. At the resumption of relations, Bond was appointed British consul at Philadelphia. He seemed at a loss to know why his reception and installation in office were delayed by the authorities. Piqued, he was all the more ready to engage in a systematic game of espionage for Great Britain, the aim of which was to nip in the bud any flowering of American commerce. In a perfect deluge of letters he poured into the ears of "My Lord Carmarthen," head of the British Foreign Office, the story of his hopes and fears.

Bond was first alarmed by the situation in America when he found that British merchants, hampered by the East India Company's monopoly, determined to get round that obstacle by ruse. Loading for America, they would come to New York and Philadelphia, convert their goods into American property, and proceed to India. Returning from India, they would repeat the process, then proceed to England ready to look the East India Company in the face with an innocent smile. This he communicated to his Lordship. There he could be directly effective.

But with the China trade it was different. He sought to

belittle the possibilities of competition there by minimizing the importance of the several ports in any commerce. Except for Philadelphia and New York, he said they were all insignificant, from Salem and Boston down. But to Bond's chagrin the energy in pushing the trade from all directions after the experiment of the *Empress of China* was tremendous. In June of 1787 the *Alliance* slipped out of Philadelphia and returned the following year with a cargo surmised by Phineas to be worth half a million, never having dropped anchor till she reached Canton. The profit from the *Alliance* postponed the impending bankruptcy which finally made Robert Morris end his days in prison. Two months after the *Alliance* sailed, the ship *Hope*, Samuel Shaw again, arrived from Canton. Bond had hoped to secure the vouchers of the *Hope's* cargo for his Lordship, but, he explained, "all the public offices have become very secret and jealous" about giving such information. However, the voyage of the *Hope* was so successful that merchants became convinced that ships of six or seven hundred tons burden were the best for the trade.

Bond was by this time fully aroused to the dangers of the situation. "But, my Lord," he fairly shrieked, "The Ministry does not stop here. The encouragement the Americans have met with in their trade with China has induced them to enter largely into this speculation." He had only one consolation. "The number of ships already employed in that trade must overstock the American market." Why, why, these insufferable parvenus even "boast of the civility and kindness they have experienced from every quarter!"

While his prophecies show that he was not without sound judgment on market conditions (for the market in China was soon overstocked with ginseng, and that in America with tea) he belies these hopes by a subsequent dispatch to "my Lord." "I expressed apprehension it might ere long be extended and directed to channels which might prove detrimental to the revenue and commerce of Great Britain. . . ." Oh, of course, under the circumstances, it was "only natural for men of enterprise to engage in such speculations as are open to them

and which afford a chance of profit, but, though the trade was not hitherto very productive, and articles brought were inferior in quality, and it was first thought, my Lord, that the delays of the voyage, the expense of outfit, all such things would soon have discouraged this undertaking"—but instead, alas, my Lord, what do we see? "Why, new sources of profit appeared" and "investments were facilitated so as to secure the future extension of the trade." He had heard of a group of Philadelphia merchants who subscribed more than \$100,000 and built a ship of between three and four hundred tons.

By December of the same year, the inevitable occurred. Shipowners were unable to fill their quotas of dollars requisite to making profitable ventures. Bond sent his "Ldp." all the information he possessed, and was happy to be able to advise him that "the languid manner" in which ships were being outfitted was a confirmation of the "opinion I presumed to offer to your Ldp. that a very little matter by way of check would perfectly unhinge this trade and completely derange all the plans of those engaged in it." Another letter specifies how this can be done. "This city, my Lord, is so restricted by the regulation of trade of other nations that this traffic seems to be the only expedient they can adopt, and so weak are the resources of the merchants here, that if an early check or restraint can be thrown in their way, either by thwarting their credit, or by withholding the articles suitable to their commerce, I am convinced they would never rally; and then, my Lord, they would be confined to their coasting trade and to an illicit communication with the Spaniards."

The next two years, however, were destined to leave Phineas nothing but his malicious dreams to dwell upon. On August 3, 1788, he reports the arrival of two vessels at New York, one from Canton, the other from Madras; "the cargoes of these vessels are valuable; tho' their burden is not great." But when the *Alliance* returned he was compelled to admit that her cargo was valued at "little short of £100,000 sterling; the teas are said to be the same in qualities as those purchased this year by the British East India Company."

But if financial computations were incontrovertible, he could at least belittle the geographic profits. The captain had reported discovering some new islands, but Phineas felt quite sure that it would turn out that they had already been discovered, though till then "not favored with a name."

With this last gasp, we leave Phineas and his invidious schemes. That these exemplify the general attitude to the new republic is obvious enough from consideration of the causes of the War of 1812. But one wonders what would have happened had there been no China, serene and remote, beyond these jealousies, receiving the little nation as an equal among all others.

## 2

For a while there were troubles enough in the country without the machinations of Phineas and his Lordship. Poverty continued to be a plague for all these brilliant ventures. While the Mohican Indians were scouring the hills for ginseng to be exchanged for rum and nicotine so that the Chinese might have their medicine and the Americans their tea, political barter was also taking place. The dent in China making for the undoing of the Manchu dynasty was reacting favourably upon federalism in America, which in turn was to spell the extinction of the red men as a race. When the first census was taken in 1790 there were only 3,929,214 people in the country. Scattered over vast tracts of forest land, they developed anti-social tendencies. It took Hamilton three days to ride from New York to Poughkeepsie to attend the Constitutional Convention, and he waited weeks to hear whether Virginia would or would not enter the Union. Four years after this Hamilton saw the difficulties of communication when he advanced with Washington against the Pennsylvania Insurrectionists, who found it more profitable to convert their corn into whiskey than to transport it to market as corn. Under such conditions westward expansion could not be a very vital factor. First one needed to bind together what was already essentially American, though it did not yet feel so.

While Phineas was blowing hot and cold with every new sail that appeared on the blue sea, the New York *Packet* was offering a prayer for "the speedy adoption of the federal system because of the present distressing situation. . . . In the present dullness of trade and scarcity of money, it must be regarded as a particular blessing that the uncommon mildness of the weather, for the season of the year, the cheapness of the fuel, and the very moderate rates of market provisions accord a welcome and salutary relief to all classes of people, particularly the poor."

With the adoption of the Constitution things steadily improved. True that Patrick Henry charged the Federalists with "squinting towards monarchy" and that "His Highness the President of the United States of America, and Protector of their Liberties" bore himself with icy aloofness. But they were soon to find the winter of their discontent made glorious by the coming of prosperity.

One of the first effects of the Constitution was that it gave Congress power "to regulate commerce with foreign nations"; and since that trade was directly and indirectly concerned with the Far East wherein it was most important at the time, Congress gave by the Navigation Act of 1789 every conceivable advantage to merchants engaged in the China trade, especially if cargoes arrived direct from Canton in American bottoms. It let loose upon the seven seas the pent-up aspirations of people who really knew of no other way to earn a living.

By 1790, the United States won its first diplomatic victory over England on an issue centring in the Pacific. England and Spain were on the verge of war over the Nootka Sound controversy. Seeing that America was likely to become involved on one side or the other, England thought better of her neglect to send a minister to the States and dispatched Major Beckwith to pave the way for more definite recognition, thus remedying a very unpleasant situation.

In the years that followed, the squabbles in Europe did for American commerce what they did for Japan in 1914. They gave it command of the trade of the Atlantic and of the Pacific.

The China trade had called forth the maritime genius of the people, the several years of roving in the distant ocean had provided ships, men, and knowledge of geography which the Americans were not tardy to employ as carriers for the world. Hence, when the war broke out between France and England, "the merchant flag of every belligerent, save England, disappeared from the sea. France and Holland absolutely ceased to trade under their flags. Spain for a while continued to transport her specie and her bullion in her own ships, protected by her men-of-war. But this, too, she soon gave up, and by 1806 the dollars of Mexico and the ingots of Peru were brought to her shores in American bottoms. It was under our flag that the gum trade was carried on with Senegal; that the sugar trade was carried on with Cuba; that coffee was exported from Caracas; and hides and indigo from South America. From Vera Cruz, from Cartagena, from La Plata, from the French colonies in the Antilles, from Cayenne, from Dutch Guiana, from the Isles of France and Reunion, from Batavia and Manila, great fleets of American merchantmen sailed for the United States, there to neutralize the voyage and go on to Europe." Thus McMaster summarizes the situation. Little wonder then that, as Adams says, "The growth of American shipping from 1789 to 1807 is without parallel in the history of the commercial world."

## 3

But over this commerce there hung a doom which not even the incredible energies of Salem could now avert. Premonitions of what was to come there had been all along, like flying shadows across that bright page of history. As early as March 18, 1791, the *Salem Gazette* had written: "This last week has been the scene of general gloom and anxiety in the town. Every day has brought with it fresh intelligence of insults to our flag, abuse to our seamen, and destruction to our commerce. Our merchants have suspended their business, our sailors are wandering about for want of employment, and our labourers will

soon be starving in idleness." From this and many similar attacks of depression the maritime towns rallied. It was to be more than fifteen years, before, upon this cry of "Wolf, wolf," the real wolf should appear—and stay. But interspersed among all the breezy items about elephants and Brahmins' wives, in the Salem "Annals," there is the continual record of those "insults to our flag"—sometimes by France, sometimes by England, sometimes in a more gory shape by those devilish protégés of Great Britain, the Algerian pirates. From first to last the East Indian commerce was carried on against unbelievable odds. When a ship had passed the Malay *cris* and the cannibal clubs, there was still a good chance that her cargo would fall a prey at last to some French or English pirate in home seas. With a fair wind and open water, the fleet-winged Americans had little to fear. But often while they were resting at ease in some European or West Indian port, believing that they had conformed to all the maritime laws that France and England had lately passed between them, the ship and cargo would be suddenly seized on this or that pretext, and, even if some unexpected justice intervened, the delay and expense in getting the vessel released would eat up all its profits.

Sometimes these seizures were justified by a rigmarole of international law which both the French and the British interpreted very much as they pleased; more often it was sheer piracy. No precedent could make an American safe against the whim or the covetousness of the first Frenchman or Briton of power that he happened to encounter. For while the French and the British had been at loggerheads by land and sea, the Americans were reaping the rewards that naturally attend upon the individual who goes peaceably about his business while the rest of the world is fighting. It stands to reason that neither France nor England found this pleasant to contemplate. However the two great belligerents might disagree, they were at one in their enmity to these American ships. Hence the American had to go about his tasks with doubled fists, striking out here and there whenever things got desperate. During these few

years the United States fought an informal war with France and another with the Barbary pirates. And still the worst offender of all went unchecked.

Through all this the Oriental trade remained a comfort and a hope. "As some light on our commercial affairs amidst their thick gloom," remarks the Salem "Annals," at one time, "five Indiamen have recently arrived." Despite the pessimistic report in 1807, that "in whatever direction our foreign trade was pursued, it was liable to be met with disaster and ruin," yet, in the face of the embargo which was to ruin the glory of Salem, there is this jubilant report. "For the quarter ending this year, the duties on imported goods in Salem amounted to \$511,000.00, the largest sum so charged since the Constitution was adopted." Among the cargoes which contributed to these duties, seventeen were from Calcutta and six from Sumatra.

At last the destruction of American shipping became so great that Jefferson determined that the only course left was to keep all American ships off the seas—in which decision the Southern states loudly concurred, believing from their comfortable position on their own plantations that the land was livelihood enough for any man, and asking, Why court trouble abroad when one can peaceably grow tobacco at home? "The whole world is laid under interdict by these nations," wrote Jefferson in his proclamation of the Embargo of 1807, "and our own vessels, their cargoes, and their crews, are to be taken by one or the other for whatever place they may be destined outside our limits. If therefore, on leaving our harbours, we are certainly to lose them, is it not better as to vessels, cargoes, and seamen, to keep them at home?" Thenceforth all American ships were forbidden to leave port, and the United States Navy, such as it was, was mobilized outside of Salem, Boston, and New York harbours to keep any vessel from slipping out. To the Southern and inland people it seemed reasonable enough. They had never had much sympathy with this harsh business of ploughing the sea when there was a continent at their elbows in greater need of ploughing. To the maritime ports, and to Salem more than any, it was maddening. Out there, with sail

and keel and gun, there was still one sporting chance of bringing the wealth of the Indies safe to port, the richer for the hazard. But this sitting still day after day, watching the dandelions grow on the wharves, this deathly stillness where all had been bustle, this silencing of hammer and saw in the shipyards, nothing to do, nothing to hope for—this was a coward's fate, skulking and hiding to preserve life to an end not worth the trouble.

So hateful was the embargo, that more than one vessel literally fought its way to sea, preferring to face piracy and capture abroad rather than perish of ennui at home. All the while the vessels that were already out in the Orient were kept there, going from one port to another, never trying to come home. Possibly, had the whole country been ready to fight in 1807, the animus of Salem would have been turned against the enemy. But by 1812, hope deferred had made the maritime towns heartsick.

The bitter opposition of the New Englanders to both the embargo and the war may be explained in several ways. Primarily, the commercial oligarchs scorned Jeffersonianism. But Jefferson was also suspected of harbouring a dislike, not only for men of trade, but for mechanics as well. "His contempt for commerce and commercial men," according to a contemporary journal, "and his despicable opinion of the morals and principles of mechanics; and his attachment to foreign manufactures and to foreign carrying trade" were, in their eyes, a heinous crime. The stirrings of the industrial and capitalistic embryo were being felt in the land. Democracy as we parade it to-day was never the breath of life to them, particularly Jeffersonian democracy. When it invaded their maritime prerogatives it struck at the very roots of their existence. Sullen, tired, worn with rebellion, New England was in no mood to make a display of patriotic feeling when war at last did come. As for Salem, its Oriental empire had vanished as quickly as it had appeared, and who now would bring home the pepper by way of Bencoolen, or hunt the lowly *bêche-de-mer*, in his lairs among the South Sea Isles? To be sure the East Indian commerce of Salem was to

revive again in shape dazzling enough, but never in all its splendour, for youth and hope had gone out of it.

The fact was that Great Britain saw that unless American trade in the East were checked, her position as Mistress of the Seas would slip from her. This soon became a life-and-death struggle. Thus did the fears of Phineas Bond become realities and thus were his personal intrigues converted into national policies.

## 4

It was not long before the stage upon which this act was being played swung round into the Pacific. The British Admiralty began to find its seamen deserting to American ships in the Pacific where, for the moment, better wages and better conditions were offered. This problem was more serious in the Pacific because of the difficulty of securing substitute sailors, further complicated by the fact that Chinese were not allowed to depart freely. Thus the type of men to be found idle in those lands could not but be of the very worst. Richard Cleveland, the voyageur, writes of his difficulties in securing a crew for a new venture of his to the Northwest:

“Having all hands on board twenty-one persons, consisting—except two Americans—of English, Irish, Swedes and French, but principally the first, who were runaways from the men-of-war and Indiamen, and two from a Botany Bay ship who had made their escape, for we were obliged to take such as we could get, served to complete a list of as accomplished villains as ever disgraced any country.”

The extremes to which Great Britain sometimes went are illustrated by the protest of the American Consul, Mr. William, dated November 19, 1792:

“A schooner called the *David & George*, belonging to Portsmouth, in Virginia, and commanded by Captain Goffigan, lately touched at Sierra Leone, on the Coast of Africa; she was



*In those days before the camera the East Indian merchants sent  
their American friends carved images of themselves*



navigated by 11 persons. Three of that number who had been on shore, informed Capt. Wilkham, who commanded an armed vessel, that they were British subjects. He went on board the American vessel and claimed the three seamen; he also claimed wages for them. Capt. Goffigan refused to deliver the men, and declared with truth that nothing was due them. Capt. Wilkham took the men by force, and by the same regulation he went into the hold and took as much of the cargo as he thought fit, under the cover of substitute for wages. Capt. Goffigan complained of this violence and robbery to Mr. C. who is governor of the Province. The Governor replied that he should have done the same thing, and that he had orders from his superiors so to act in such cases."

Other cases of American ships in the Indies and the Far East being held up were cited. On April 3, 1813, William Gray, the Boston merchant, published in the *Columbian Sentinel* a deposition as follows:

"I have lately received a copy of a letter from the supercargo of the ship *Pekin*, belonging to Philadelphia on which I am an underwriter: the letter is dated 15th July 1812, at Calcutta, and states that in February preceding, while he was at or near the Batavia roads, the men-of-war that had been ordered on an expedition, impressed every seaman belonging to the vessel. The letter gives no account of what has become of the men since."

To leave a ship unmanned so far from its home port was as bad as a disaster at sea. When therefore American ships found that they were being crippled even in Asia, their bitter antagonism to the war abated somewhat, however much they may have resented the restrictions of the embargo.

When the war broke out, the situation was still further complicated in China. The British ships would try to capture American vessels in the very harbours of the Pearl River, or bring their prizes in for safe-keeping. When the British ship *Doris* brought the American vessel *Hunter* into Whampoa as a

prize, "the Chinese ordered the servants away from the English factories, and threatened to stop the trade," if they did not remove the *Doris* and her captive. With their usual disdain for foreigners, the Chinese recommended that if the British and Americans had any petty quarrels to fight they should go home and do their fighting there.

In consequence, apart from the occasional entrance of some vessel such as the *Montesquieu*, and another at Newport, each worth half a million dollars, the China trade collapsed entirely with the advent of hostilities, and "a commerce once second to England's alone, fell from forty-five millions in 1811, to twenty-five millions in 1813, and to seven millions for the year ending September 30, 1814," according to the estimate of Admiral Mahan..

Between the English and the Americans in the East there was little personal animosity, as there seldom is between mere enemies of state. On their part, the English merchants were resentful of the monopoly maintained by the East India Company, and they were willing enough to aid and abet the Americans in its undoing. That company was feeling the losses thus incurred very heavily. Its reports to Parliament announced decreases by the million. This the British merchants did not observe with disfavour. On the contrary, they even began to look upon the War of 1812 as a blessing. An item in the *Columbian Sentinel* of Boston, for October 2, 1813, purporting to be an excerpt from a London paper, might just as reasonably have emanated from an American pen:

#### EAST INDIA TRADE

"The law which has just passed Parliament for extending to our fellow subjects in general a participation in the rich trade to India, has given great satisfaction to the nation at large, and greatly revived commercial speculations. This is one of the benefits which our merchants have reaped from the War which America has so foolishly waged against us, for such was the influence of the merchants who do business with America during peace, that had the two nations been in Peace they could and

would have prevented the passage of the bill. By the 37th of the present King it is well-known the United States of America were allowed to trade freely in India, while his Majesty's subjects at home and abroad, excepting the East India Company *were excluded from the trade*. Though it will hardly be credited, foolish liberality—this unjust partiality to foreigners—that we have increased the wealth, capital and prosperity of America; and furnished her with part of the means she is now using against us. The largest fortunes which have been accumulated in America, have been by merchants trading with India. Our enterprising merchants will now have their turn; and will supply the markets which the Americans used to monopolize."

Meanwhile, the thousands of idle sailors and ships, imprisoned by the embargo and restrained by the Non-intercourse Act, sprang to life and action upon the declaration of war. Privateering, now not only legal but patriotic, became the order of the day. The twelve hundred men who in New York alone had been thrown into prison for debt during the restraint of trade, now were given a chance to retrieve their losses and join all others daring enough to go out upon the high seas.

Nevertheless, the war was a very necessary respite to the China trade. The fur trade was becoming exhausted. Other developments were requisite before America's overseas trade could become more firm and substantial. America was still but the carrier abroad and importer at home. The country needed to be opened westward overland toward the Pacific. The lesson of the precariousness of dependence on the sea was driven home and understood.

But there was a still greater difficulty. In none of those thousands of miles of water was there a single safe resting place for American vessels. The British had India, the Dutch the East Indies, France had Mauritius or the Isle of France, but America had not one rock in the world outside of this continent to which its ships could go freely. Shaw's venture with the *Massachusetts* was spoiled by the restrictions of the Dutch at Batavia. Phineas Bond had soothed his Lordship by pointing

to America's lack of a base in the Indies. In the general correspondence of business men of that day this handicap was reiterated. Edward Hooker in his Diary quotes a letter to that effect, and it was slowly dawning upon people that the safest and shortest route to China was overland, and that ultimately an establishment on the Pacific would be inevitable. Ledyard's idea, long rejected, was taking root.

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## CHAPTER VII

### NOTICE TO MANDARINS

MORE than a hundred years had gone by since New Caledonia was conceived in the Darien Expedition, yet the scheme had never actually died. When ninety-five years afterward the fur trade was inaugurated on the Northwest coast, the dream of an emporium on the Pacific again struck root. Within the next quarter century such an emporium was actually founded; though again, as we shall now see, unsuccessfully. The vision, so far in advance of all practical developments, held men's minds. While the prosaic profits of the fur trade were never neglected, they afforded respite to those no longer money-mad who yet loved illusion. Pile all the gold of all the veins of earth on all the gems that men have ever fought for or women worn, and it will never sparkle in man's sight with the splendour of the gold he will never find. Perhaps it is to escape the binding limitations of power and the clogging satiety of wealth that men seek more of both.

Why hunt treasure, said Benjamin Franklin, when during the time it takes to find it one could earn as much as the treasure amounts to at any good job? This is to miss the whole value of treasure hunting in human history. Most men saw in the fur trade only gold and its selfish and private uses. But there were always those in this enterprise who, on sighting a new land, a new possibility of profit, felt like the maimed Pegasus that Plato imagined the soul of man to be, felt their wings quicken with the vision of a new and more perfect world—felt the material object to be but an earnest of something greater still to be gained. And though the great schemes of wealth may have seemed selfish, too, they had latent in them an ideal quality, a wider social implication than the tinkling bell of the cash register.

Fabulous and intangible as all great schemes for tapping the riches of Asia were, there was still in the most gaudy a base of practical possibility, for many a grand schemer was really a man of great insight and ability, however disastrous may have been his manipulations.

Though these schemes anticipated life by a hundred years or so, there was always a real need for a permanent establishment somewhere on the Pacific coast. The difficulties that confronted the commerce of the new States in the Atlantic, with France and England everlastingly at loggerheads, were but an earnest of the trials and tribulations that lay in store for them as their trade and industry increased. The need of some station in those far-off regions wherein Americans might be free from foreign depredations was clear to all. At first they hoped to share one with France. As far back as May 19, 1784, Robert Morris had written to the Marquis de Lafayette:

“In pursuance of what I have just now said to Congress, I shall proceed to request your exertions for establishing a free port at the Isle of France or Bourbon. You will easily obtain sufficient information in Europe to direct your applications on this subject, and Mr. Constable will, I think, be able to give you some useful information as to the consequences of it upon this country. I confess, that it appears to me to be the probable means of establishing at that port, the most extensive and useful commerce with India, that has ever yet existed. To France and to America it will be most particularly useful, because we shall trade freely and without risk to such port, and you will undoubtedly furnish us with all those articles of Indian goods, which we shall otherwise go in search of to India, or procure from other nations. This will form an object of nearly twenty millions of livres annually, or calculating both the export and import cargoes, it will amount to about thirty millions of livres and consequently cannot be less than five millions clear advantage to France; and if it be considered, that this is so much taken from her commercial rival, we may estimate it as being an object of ten millions annually. Such being the importance

of it with respect to America, what may we not calculate on for the other countries, who may incline to trade thither? . . .

“Returning then to a commercial view of the subject, I consider it as almost certain, that America would find it more advantageous to trade with that port than to go on to India; and hence I draw one very strong inference, that we should not only be by that means brought into closer political connection with France, but that France would hold a much larger share of all our other commerce, than she would without such an establishment.”

Some years after that, Stephen Higginson, the Boston merchant, wrote to John Adams, urging the same arrangement with France. “Considering,” he said, “the subject in a national and political view, they must be disposed to encourage our trade, to the Isle of France in particular and give us all that freedom which they at first intended, and we enjoyed. The local situation of the island is peculiarly favourable to annoy the British trade to India and China, and to protect their own. It may indeed be viewed as the Key to both the Chinese and Indian seas from Europe.”

## 2

There were lesser personages who had the same object in mind, even though usually for more private interests. But it always takes the dreamer, the impractical man to plunge headlong into a project others are wary of. Such a man was John Kendrick, captain of the initial expedition of the *Columbia*, who, as we will recall, was so busy pursuing chimeras that he never got round to visiting Boston again. He had begun at once to buy up all the land he could get from the Indians, having had, it seems, no small notions about anything. “Two of his favourite plans,” said John Howell, clerk of the *Columbia*, “were to change the prevalence of the Easterly winds in the Atlantic Ocean, and turn the Gulf Stream into the Pacific by cutting a canal through Mexico.” When, after a somewhat questionable career, and a death the manner and time of which were long

disputed,<sup>1</sup> his records were searched, it was found that he had left his legatees \$17,717 worth of debts, and deeds deposited in the consul's office at Canton to several large tracts of land which he had purchased from the Indians for guns and hatchets—tracts as large as a European kingdom. The Department of State at Washington still holds the letters filed in the settlement of this estate, letters which played their part in the dispute with England over Oregon.

"But with all his follies," adds Howell, "he was a wonderful man—and worthy to be remembered. . . . The passing, two-penny objects of his expedition were swallowed up in the magnitude of his Gulliverian views. North East America was on the Lilliputian, but he designed North West America to be on the Brobdingnagian scale."

So here was another visionary like Ledyard, who, in the light of modern times is proved to have been not altogether a fool.

Like the mediæval Vikings, the Nor'westmen from Boston were distinguished from other sea rovers by a disposition to settle and make themselves at home on strange shores. "At first," says C. F. Keary, author of "Vikings in Western Europe," "the raids are made in the summer: the *first wintering* in any new scene of plunder forms an epoch so far as that country or region is concerned. Almost always, all power of resistance on the part of the inhabitants seems after a while and for a limited time to break down, and the plunderers to have free course wherever they go. Then they show an ambition to settle

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<sup>1</sup>Henry B. Restarick, Bishop of Hawaii, kindly gives us from his own researches the following: "Captain Kendrick was accidentally killed in Honolulu harbor on December 7, 1794. The circumstances were these: A salute was being fired by the English ship *Jackal*, when by mistake a loaded gun was fired, and the ball entering the cabin of the *Lady Washington* where the Captain was seated at dinner, he was killed. He was buried on shore and I believe that the place of his interment is now known. His was the first burial of a white man on the Island of Oahu, and it excited much interest among the natives. Captain Charles Derby of Salem was buried near the grave of Kendrick in September 1802. It is believed that Padre Howell who was with the *Lady Washington* at the time of Kendrick's death read the burial service. We know that it was read by some one. Howell had been ordained a clergyman of the Church of England. Vancouver mentions him, as does Boit in his journal."

in the country and some sort of division of territory takes place." So was it on the Northwest coast. At first deserters and ne'er-do-wells from sailing vessels established themselves among the Indians. These were poor material for permanent settlement. Then more sober colonists arrived; like the three brothers Abiel, Nathan, and Jonathan Winship, who tried to plant the first colony on the Columbia River in June, 1810. They failed. There were needed greater capital and still better organization.

Yet in the history of Ophir it cannot be said that a single scheme, however vaguely conceived, ever failed to serve some end of man. The myriad seeds that never flower do not detract from the wonder of procreation. Even the little plants that die to yield predominance to the more stalwart shoot have served their purpose in holding the field for the favoured tree against the perennial encroachment of lesser life. So in the migratory pageant of human life, the feet that have led, though they have failed to reach their goal, have paved the way for empire. In these days when much is heard about the rising tide of colour and the melting pot and the impairment of purity by the invasion of inferior hordes, it is disconcerting to see what we did in the Pacific. The reckless derelicts who violated the simplicity of the savages of the Northwest and the South Seas were the offshoot of the self-same stocks that roused a protest from Philadelphia against the shipment of English criminals to the colonies in 1751. But perhaps the type most needed to counteract the depredations of the uncivilized were the renegades from civilization; and in the development of the Northwest they made clearings for their followers.

## 3

Though the bubbles of the early part of the 18th Century taught people a sorry lesson, the dream of some day planting an emporium upon the Pacific that should proudly face the gorgeous East never waned. Leydard, Jefferson, Morris, Benton, one after another kept clearly in mind the need of American transmontane development even to the shores of the Pacific. We have seen that Phineas Bond held our lack of a depot in the

Pacific as the weakest point in our commercial prospect. But this we shall consider in greater detail in a later chapter. Meanwhile, there was one man who arrived in New York in 1783 whose practical astuteness and vaulting imagination were soon to give substance to this dream. That man was John Jacob Astor.

Astor had come over to Dutch America from Germany by way of London. His official biographer declares that he arrived with coin jingling in his pockets as representative of his brother's London piano factory to sell instruments to the natives. On board he is said to have met a gentleman who gave him valuable information about the fur trade. Astor immediately engaged in the fur business, returned to England with a quantity of furs which he sold at great profit, and then established himself in New York as a merchant. This is the official account.

The unofficial version emanating from so judicious a chronicler as Walter Barrett, author of "Old Merchants of New York," says: "Peanuts!" [sic] According to Barrett, Astor arrived by the means which has brought more good citizens to America than the *Mayflower*, that is, the steerage. Upon his arrival, indignantly avowed his sister, Mrs. Abraham Beninger, wife of a New York baker, "Yakob vas noting put a paker poy und solt pread und kak."

However, within twenty years Astor was a millionaire. By 1800, he is said to have sent a shipment of furs to China, and was already studying the problem of carrying furs from the Great Lakes to the Pacific Ocean overland and thence by way of Hawaii to China and India. Astor doubtless thought of building up for himself a monopoly similar to that of the British East India Company. The New Yorkers of that day were still accustomed to see the gala uniforms of the East Indiamen, and the Orient still played upon their imagination. While in Philadelphia societies were being organized to encourage useful manufactures and devise uniforms for the people, men's minds basked obliquely in specimens of Oriental composition selected from the translations of linen merchants in the service of the

Honourable John Company containing enlightenment on the Bhagavad Gita (the dialogues of Kreeshna) and the mysteries of the Hindu pantheon and of Arjoon. New York, though it remained essentially Dutch in its composite for fully twenty-five years after the Revolution, lived in part at least in Asia. During the terrible plague of 1805, when thousands died of yellow fever and every port in the West Indies, South America, and the United States was put under the ban of quarantine, vessels from Canton and Calcutta came and went as they willed. However slight an incident like that might seem in ordinary times, it cannot but appear exaggerated in times of trial and stress.

From fever the city jumped into the embargo. It was a period of gloom. Merchants and shipowners saw their trade vanish and their ships rotting in the harbour. Idle seamen were receiving poor relief. To advertise the arrival of a Bengal leopard, the New York Museum announced:

“The Leopard, detested name! While we write, the blood boils with indignation. AMERICANS—this is not the Leopard who murders your citizens, who tramples on your rights, who violates your flag, who has abused your confidence. No, this Leopard is now harmless, for he is—dead.”

This was insufficient. New York wanted something lively. And in a little while she got it.

For this is all by the way, and is nothing, after all, in comparison with the brilliant merchant of that day who could rub an oil lamp and produce a Chinese mandarin right in the park grounds before the City Hall. And such a mandarin at that—one who could soften the heart of the implacable Jefferson and melt his precious embargo. To such a merchant and such a mandarin Jefferson's determination to make his Americans walk to the Pacific westward across the continent on foot instead of riding there comfortably on the backs of the winds yielded amiably. The mandarin was Picqua; the merchant, John Jacob Astor.

Astor, it seems, dealt not only in furs, but in mandarins. The embargo had embarrassed him, somewhat, he told President Jefferson. An exalted gentleman of China with an aged father at home had come over to America on one of his ships. Regardless of expense, courtesy demanded that he should see this personage to the gates of Canton. But there was that embargo and its three-mile limit. Couldn't the restrictions for the sailing of vessels be let down just to help this worthy chief?

Jefferson, the democrat, bowed graciously before this mandarin. From Madison, a friend of Astor's, he had been advised of the situation and accepted things at their face value. To his Secretary of the Treasury, Gallatin, he sent a blank passport for the vessel Astor was placing at the disposal of the Chinese, calling attention to that section of the Embargo Act which covered such cases—cases of "national comity." Modestly he hoped that "the departure of this individual with good disposition may be the means of making our nation known advantageously at the source of power in China, to which it is otherwise difficult to convey information." A democracy is in the very nature of things bound to be inconsistent. Breaking down the barriers raised by aristocracy, it allows for the development of character. With the development of character there is of necessity an increased respect for the worthy—for aristocracy. Jefferson was no fool. His judgment may have been blinded for the moment by the vistas opening to his imagination in our relations with China, and in Astor's projects for the Northwest trade. He was not going to allow fear of criticism to stand in the way of furthering the diplomatic ends of the country at a time when the friendship of a great Power like China would have been like a big stick to Europe. Later, in this connection, he made the first important pronouncement of America on Far Eastern affairs when he said: "The opportunity hoped from that, of making known through one of its own characters of note, our nation, our circumstances and character, and of letting that government understand at length the difference between us and the English, and separate us in its policy,

rendered that measure a diplomatic one, in my view, and likely to bring lasting advantage to our merchants and commerce with that country." . . . And who knows but that Jefferson himself was not now a bit shaky about the efficacy of the embargo?

The country that had seen more than one collector and inspector dismissed by the President for not using due diligence in executing the embargoes remained silent in this case. The casual announcement of the sailing of the *Beaver* was followed by bitter sarcasm when it was discovered that on August 5, 1808, she had sailed, not with a Chinese mandarin, but with a China peddler dressed up in Astor's Canton silks to play the part. The *New York Gazette* issued a

"*Notice to Mandarins*—A Sum of not more than 20,000, nor less than 50,000 dollars, to be determined by contract, will be paid to a *Mandarin* who, during the present embargo, will obtain permission from the President of the United States for a ship of from 450 to 500 tons burthen to proceed from New York to Canton and back to New York.

"As the *Mandarins* who reside in the United States did not '*foresee the present crisis*' and left their credentials at home, they will be permitted to prove their *rank* and the degree of *favour* to which they are of course entitled *by certificates from any prefect of the French Emperor Napoleon*.

"The Person who obtains the permission must be one of our '*red brethren*' who whether a native of Asia or America is immaterial, provided he is a *genuine Mandarin*.

"The Mandarin must have an *aged father*, and as he will *not* be a candidate for the President's office, his age may be exaggerated, without offence to Mr. Jefferson. . . . If more than one Mandarin should apply (as is very probable) the one whose father is oldest will *cæteris paribus* (These words are to be understood in a Chinese sense) be preferred.

"Any of the religions professed by the *Mandarins* are for common purposes '*good enough*' but to obtain *dispensations from the embargo* they ought to be '*disciples of Confucius*.'

"As attention to '*physiognomy, dress and manners*' will contribute to the success of the application, on these points advice may be obtained from the New York Philosopher, or at No. 92 Broadway.

"The Mandarin who applies must provide Secretary and defray all expenses of *shaving and dress*; but if in compliance with *Chinese custom* they submit to be squeezed a suitable reimbursement will be made in proportion to the value of the permit.

"This value will be enhanced if the permit should authorize the *export of specie*; such a privilege being *denied* by the *Statutes of Congress*, and *authorized* only by the *rescripts* of the President, in respect to the Embargo Laws. As these wise and learned commentaries have not been published entire, an exemplification of that section which contains the *exception in favour of Mandarins* must be produced. If, however, the principles of confederation do not permit *Mandarins* to cover the property of the *Citizens* of the *United States* the privilege of *exporting money* will be unimportant.

"No secret partner can be admitted unless the person proposed is acquainted with the President's rescripts and can give information that the Embargo Laws will be repealed, and in the meantime, how they will be modified, enforced and mitigated with reference to general principles and particular interests.

"Proposals addressed to X. Y. Z. will be considered and by due secrecy observed.

"August 9, 1808."

Within a few days the truth of the situation began to dawn upon people, and the political aspects of the permission granted Astor and the *Beaver* took on their true proportions. On the 13th, the *Commercial Advertiser* of New York expressed itself editorially:

"*The ship Beaver and the Mandarin*: The public attention is particularly invited to transactions of a most extraordinary complexion.

"A first rate Merchant ship, which will be navigated by

about 30 seamen, is preparing for sea, and is expected to proceed on a voyage to Canton, in a few days, under a *special permission* from the President of the United States.

“The ostensible object of this voyage is to carry home a person who is said to be a *Mandarin of China*.

“It is, however, well known that the person for whom permission has been obtained is no Mandarin; is not even a licensed or security Merchant:—that his departure from China was contrary to the law of that country; that if he arrives in China he will be put on shore privately, and that the obscurity of his condition in life affords him the only chance he has of avoiding punishment.

“It is also believed that the owner of the ship, would not accept all the property of all the Chinese in this country as compensation for the voyage, and it is known that he offered to contract for bringing home goods on freight.

“Whatever may have been the motives of the President in granting a permission, it is however certain that the object of the owner of the ship is to make a China voyage during a time when other *Merchants* are restrained by the Embargo.

“The time of granting this permission is remarkable:—it is when the general Embargo is imposed on all commerce with our nearest neighbors; when exchange of domestic produce with Canada, New Brunswick and the Floridas is interdicted by an armed force—when the intercourse of our city in our own bays, rivers and harbours, in small boats, incapable of a sea voyage, is subject to the most rigorous control of the Custom House; nay, more, this permission is to go into effect when on account of some new and unknown political necessity all other permissions which have not been carried into effect are rescinded; this ship is one of the most valuable; the number of seamen exposed to peril the greatest in any Merchant’s service, and the voyage, not to the West Indies, but to the Antipodes.

“If the Government has been surprised and the permission obtained by any misrepresentation, the error can be vindicated, the honour of the administration and the reputation of all concerned, require that the explanation be made.

"Fellow-Citizens, let us observe the progress of this affair;— if the trade is safe, and can be prosecuted consistently with the public interests, let all who are willing, engage in it; otherwise, let all be restrained: let there be an embargo, or no embargo; but let us not countenance partial dispensations from the operation of general laws."

The *Beaver* sailed, however, and Astor came back at them with an airy impenitence free from the dust of argument:

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE *Commercial Advertiser*:

"MR. LEWIS: I observe in your paper of the 13th instant a piece inviting the public attention to transactions (as is there stated) of a most extraordinary complexion, relative to the ship *Beaver* and the Mandarin. If the author of the piece will please give his name, and if he is not prejudiced against every action of the Administration, nor influenced by envy arising from jealousy he shall receive a statement of facts relative to the transaction in question, which will relieve him from the anxiety in which he appears to labor for the honor of the government, and the reputation of all concerned. He shall be convinced that the government has not been surprised by misrepresentation in granting permission, and that the reputation of those concerned cannot in the slightest degree be affected.

"By giving the above a place in your paper you will oblige, Sir,

"Your humble servant,  
"JOHN JACOB ASTOR."

"NEW YORK, Aug. 15, 1808."

Astor proved to be no niggardly host, content with merely discharging an obligation. While he was about it he was determined to treat his Mandarin handsomely. So he ordered the *Beaver* not only to take him to China, but to give him a ride up the Northwest coast. Incidentally, they might pick up a few thousand dollars' worth of furs. When the *Beaver* returned to America, after this philanthropic and diplomatic mission, she was worth \$200,000 more than when she started.

## 4

The successful voyage of the *Beaver* brought to maturity a scheme which Astor had long had in mind. The treaty with Great Britain in 1795 had made possible the direct shipment of furs from Canada to the United States even as the Nootka Sound controversy had determined the sending of a diplomatic representative from England to the United States, long withheld. Thus at one stroke, as it were, it made possible the drainage of Northern furs from both coasts and enhanced the value of such traffic in China. Astor at once saw that to remain master of the Eastern fur trade he would also have to obtain a hold on the Western main. Furthermore, between 1789 and 1800 three new states and three territories had been incorporated into the Union, commencing that westward movement which to men like Jefferson was the very breath of national life. To offset the possibility of France developing the Mississippi region he had purchased Louisiana. While he had no hope of imperialism for the States, he did look forward eagerly to the time when new democratic nations would rise up in the West as a buffer against European aggrandizement. Hence, when Astor approached Jefferson through his friend Madison with the details of his scheme for founding an emporium on the Northwest coast, Jefferson saw at a flash that there lay security, and commended him for his efforts, and offered him "every facility and protection which the government could properly afford."

Again it was a capable, practical financier who conceived a project the wealth and splendour of which could not but be, for a time at least, an *ignis fatuus*. "From this great mart," says Bancroft, "seated at the entrance of the mighty River of the West, yielding to none in wealth, magnitude, or position, and imposing her terms upon the commerce of the coast and inland territories, from this vast emporium sailing vessels of every build and burden [would make] regular voyages to north and south, and to Asia, to Europe, to Boston, New York and Philadelphia. . . . It would indeed be a smooth, glittering, golden round.

furs from Astoria to Canton, teas and silks, and rich Asiatic merchandise to New York, then back again to the Columbia with beads and bells and blankets, guns, knives, tobacco and rum."

This new scheme was announced to Manhattan with a romantic flourish. One fair twilight evening in summer the good burghers of the Manhattoes heard singing along their waterfront floating in on that fresh smell of the evening tide which even to-day creeps up through the smoke and gasoline vapours of the city on summer nights. Deserting their stoeps on which they usually sat at ease at this time of day, in all the comfort of tobacco and good gossip, the more inquisitive citizens reached their docks in time to recognize the serenaders. Carolling as they paddled their bark canoes, a dozen French-Canadian voyageurs, gaily be-ribboned and be-plumed, came down the Hudson and around Battery Park and into the East River and floated up the other side of the island, singing all the way, and at last swung leisurely to landward. All the way from Montreal they had been parading their prowess and creating a wild sensation. They had navigated their canoes across Lake Champlain and had transported them overland to the Hudson; then paddled down the full length of that magnificent fiord. It was a sight suitable for the grandest of water carnivals, and the appreciative cosmopolitans knew how to manifest their approval.

These were the trappers whom Astor had imported to be sent as guides to the new station beyond the Rockies. The *Beaver* was ready for a second voyage and was to bear them away round the Horn to lay the foundations for a new commercial state, for "A colony that would form the germ of a wide civilization; that would, in fact, carry the American population across the Rocky Mountains and spread it along the shores of the Pacific."

Almost before the ship reached its destination the forces for dissolution were already at work. In fact, even as the voyageurs were gaily dispensing their balladry they were scheming for the disintegration of the project, it seems, for there was an element of national jealousy mixed up with their own private selfish ambitions. Nevertheless, at the coast they found some

Russians and some British ahead of them, but they proceeded to plant their settlement in all earnestness. One of the men Astor had sent out, M'Dougal, married an Indian princess, daughter of the chief Comcomly, and attempted to establish a petty empire of his own. But difficulties arose, and matters soon got beyond control.

Astor had sent a follow-up supply ship, the *Tonquin*, which brought with it tragedy and disaster. The *Tonquin* fell a-foul of the Indians, who succeeded in boarding the vessel by a ruse, massacred the captain and all the crew with the exception of one man who, fatally wounded, locked himself in a cabin. During the night he dragged himself about the ship placing gun-powder in several vital sections. When the Indians returned for plunder the next day, he set off the fuse and blew up the ship. Over a hundred Indian men, women, and children were strewn upon the waters, in ghastly retribution for their treachery. Astor lost about \$400,000 in the affair.

On the third voyage of the *Beaver* she gathered some \$25,000 worth of furs and sailed for Canton. Had the captain acted promptly he would have disposed of them for \$150,000, but desire for fairer gain made him hold back. Suddenly news arrived of the war with England, the captain was scared, remained, borrowed money at 18 per cent. and the entire venture petered out. Astoria was captured by the British and was not returned till 1818, and then only formally. And so again a great design was frustrated.

"Such in brief was the enterprise projected by Mr. Astor," declares Washington Irving, the historiographer of the adventure, "but which continually expanded in his mind. Indeed it is due to him to say that he was not actuated by mere motives of individual profit. He was already wealthy beyond the ordinary desires of man, but he now aspired to that honourable fame which is awarded to men of similar scope of mind, who by their great commercial enterprises have enriched nations, peopled wildernesses, and extended the bounds of empire."

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## CHAPTER VIII

### INCENSE FOR IDOLS

AFTER the War of 1812, Boston was in a mood for adventure at any cost. The Peace Ball of 1815, of which one Boston belle, arrayed in "sheer white muslin dress, with a bodice of white satin," has left an account in her diary, not omitting the British officers flirting with the ladies as blandly as if there had been no war, reawakened the cry that society was losing its tone and exclusiveness. Along with the growth of democracy came pretentiousness and, perhaps, the silliest dress and customs that ever restricted the feminine half of the human race. The revolutionary dames in whom an admiring Frenchman (Abbé Robin) had found the beauty of the "grave big women of antique statues," gave way to the simpering, fainting, tight-laced, weeping daughters of affectation. The ruddy, stout, hard-drinking Puritans of pre-revolutionary times began to attenuate and fade into characteristic Yankee types, sallow of skin and troubled with indigestion. "I am satisfied that such a set of black-coated, stiff-jointed, soft-muscled, paste-complexioned youth as we can boast of in our Atlantic cities never before sprang from loins of Anglo-Saxon lineage," wrote Oliver Wendell Holmes of this period. But he goes on to tell us that it was also a "fighting, drinking, swearing time," when the "habits of parlour and kitchen with regard to alcoholic drinks were very free and hazy," though Harvard boys dined frugally on succotash and hominy, and wore homespun, except on holidays. Mothers who could not afford the protection of Harvard hailed the comparatively safe precincts of the sea as a refuge for their growing sons. When one youngster of fourteen announced his determination to become a sailor, his mother, instead of collapsing as he expected, said she thought it was the best thing.

"Why, Mother," he said, "why do you say that?"

"Well," she answered, "if you were at sea I should know better where you were nights than I have been able to for some time."

When his sea chest was packed, he slipped in a box of cigars which had been the gift of a schoolmate. One lonesome day on shipboard, when he looked for his cigars to comfort him, he found that his sainted mother had substituted a copy of Baxters' "Saint's Rest."

And so the stream of young men out into the world increased, till men from New England were scattered over every isle and islet of the far Pacific. Every ship that slipped from an Atlantic port harboured some secret schemer who never intended to return, the interest of those they left behind became firmly fixed upon that invisible horizon. Wherever else they might by chance be thrown, one place above all others became the lodestone of their desires, and that was Hawaii. Thither the whalers and the sealers and the merchantmen steered, there to thaw out from their garments the stinging frost that had nipped their very souls. To Alaska and Oregon they went of necessity, but not a heart but was glad when the helm was turned toward Hawaii. Where was the white man more generously received? There they gathered in a week-end manner, as it were, till, as Morison has said, Hawaii was regarded as a suburb of Boston.

## 2

In time a motley crew of derelicts gathered to make merry among these pleasant savages. Mainly it was composed of men who had deserted. Concealing themselves in the fern-woods while their ship was yet in port, they emerged as soon as it left with a cheery anticipation of their fate. As the son of an Hawaiian missionary once said: "When they came forth from their hiding they were at once captured by the native police and in obedience to the law were incontinently clapped into jail. But this little ceremony did not in the least interfere with their pleasures. The jail was simply a large native house where malefactors were invited to reside at the expense of the government. Our jolly jack-tars accepted the hospitality of

the jailor at mealtime and when it rained. But the balance of their time was joyously occupied with the society of their numerous friends whenever and wherever they willed." If the policeman was amenable to reason, they accepted his escort with resignation; if not, they clubbed him into submission. Once, finding the law unusually obstreperous, they raised "the piratical flag and armed with bludgeons, they marched around the town, roaring ribald songs and shouting defiance as they went." Their impudence exceeding the generosity of even those primitive laws, the helpless Hawaiian king would call upon an alien man-of-war to put down their pretensions. In view of these manifestations of character, one begins to understand a little more clearly the puritanical regulations required in God-fearing New England.

For a time Hawaii had to make shift with the "offscourings of earth," but as more and more white men arrived, some semblance of order and decency began to penetrate the chaos. Those who there established themselves in business found these jolly tars a little too much for their peace of mind. Things might have adjusted themselves slowly but for the unfortunate discovery that the islands contained forests of sandalwood, precious in all the lands of the Orient for making chests, and as incense with which to propitiate the gods. Hitherto India had been the main source of supply, but it could not provide enough for the whole market. To the Americans now in search of a substitute for furs, which were becoming more expensive and more difficult to get, the South Seas, with their sandalwood and *bêche-de-mer*, became another dispensation from Heaven. Hardly had Salem got through sneezing deliciously over the pepper discovered at Bencoolen, Sumatra, when the godly Quakers began gathering the precious sandalwood of the South Seas and conveying it to China, to soothe the nostrils of the very Joss the missionaries went out to destroy. It seems that the nearer the white barbarians drew to the Celestial realms, the more incense did his offended nose demand.

As early as 1792, Captain Kendrick had discovered this sandalwood in Hawaii and had left two men to see that it was

gathered by Kamehameha, whose primitive treasury was soon filled with Spanish dollars and gold. As the years went by, the tastes and standards of the natives became more sophisticated. But it was not till after the War of 1812 that any extensive traffic in sandalwood began to disturb the economic and social conditions of the islands. In 1815, Bryant & Sturgis sent the *Ophelia* to Canton, instructing the captain to stop at Valparaiso and inform such American refugees as may have rushed there of the end of the war, and to buy copper which he was to take to Galápagos to be exchanged for whales' teeth, thence to sail for Ingraham's Island and the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) for sandalwood, which in turn was to be taken to China to be traded for tea and silk. Perkins instructed one of his captains to secure sandalwood from the king of the Sandwich Islands, his argument being: "A cargo of sandalwood procured without funds being all profit, would be equal to a load of copper, but in the sandalwood voyage no stock is employed other than the ship." If the king should delay, the captain was to proceed to Norfolk Sound for furs and sealskins, leaving one of his mates as hostage to satisfy the king of his intentions. Should all his prospects fail, he was to go to Batavia for coffee and return to Boston. If, however, the Dutch should want him to make a trip to Japan for them, as they had done with the *Massachusetts* and the *Franklin*, he was to take in this extra voyage before returning. But the sandalwood was successful and continued to be so for years.

The stir of life that commenced so innocently in Hawaii was soon a raging torrent. From the quiet days of Kendrick things changed to revelry and abandon. When Richard Cleveland, the writer-captain, passed there in 1803 he left the first horse to be seen on the islands. Its mettle and beauty had created mingled terror and admiration, but the king, nothing daunted, learned to ride and soon became quite a horseman. The natives, too, soon acquired more sophisticated tastes, and were all happy that there upon their islands stood vast tracts of valuable wood—valuable to the white man, but the intrinsic worth of which they had no way of properly appraising. This the

traders, naturally, were not too eager to do for them. The calicoes and cambrics, large-sized ladies' shoes, ready-made clothes, bonnets, cheap furniture, broadcloth, articles with much show and colour in them, lured the simple people into the forests where they toiled in the cutting of the wood that went down to the sea in ships.

The Hawaiian king found no difficulty in making promises to pay for his newly acquired tastes. He had little concern about the future. If his creditors threatened to force payment, every male and female on the island was taxed in wood to meet government debts incurred during moments of great hilarity or for such necessities as billiard tables and yachts. When after Crowninshield's death, his yacht, *Cleopatra's Barge*, which had been the wonder and the envy of Europe, arrived in Honolulu and was offered for sale, it won the king's heart. He would not look upon another vessel, and another bargain in sandalwood was completed. He paid \$60,000, or fully six times her original cost, for her. Every vessel brought with it some new contrivance. A mirror, not worth \$50, Mrs. Judd says was sold for from \$800 to \$1,000. The whole standard of living had risen by leaps and bounds, and the clever trader was there to encourage it—even if he had to use his foot on the scale as the wood was being weighed. One of these traders was Mr. Jones.

"Treat Mr. Jones civilly," wrote Bryant & Sturgis, "but avoid having anything to do with him if possible."

Mr. Jones wrote to his firm advising them what to send. "Coarse articles are of no use," he said. "Were I at home myself I could select an outfit that would do well. Ox teams, light waggons, hand carts, wheel barrows, carriages, and one or two of those vehicles called barrouches, two or three chaises. You might be surprised that such articles would sell, but you would be more surprised to see how fast these people are advancing toward civilization; only two days since Mr. Pitt asked me to send over three carriages and have them adorned with gold."

In a letter to Marshall of Boston we learn that "Tamoree

[one of the blood-royal] is now here with the King and all the chiefs. They have been visiting and having high times for this four months past. Perhaps they may now attend to business. Have hopes to fill the ship by December. . . . Tamoree has . . . married Carhamano, and I assure you they appear like a young married couple."

The world loves a lover, but business is nevertheless business, and this royal amour was holding up the sandalwood trade. "I am afraid our word will be worth nothing in China," declared a correspondent. "This will not be our fault. We have now owed us at the Islands over 1300 piculs [of sandalwood]. This will take some time to collect, especially at Atooi, but I have no fears but that we shall eventually obtain all. The circumstances of Tamoree's coming up here and his marriage with Carhamano has been accountable to our cause. He remains here still, almost afraid to say his soul's his own. Whenever he speaks of going to Atooi, his lady is immediately taken ill. He told me in confidence a few days since that he was miserable and wished the devil would take Carhamano. Whether they ever intend he should return is hard to say. Some think not. The ways of these people are past finding out. Not long since I had a conversation with Rheo Rheo on the subject. I told him how anxious Tamoree was to return, reminded him of the large debt he was owing. He replied he was at liberty to go when he pleased, and if he could not pay his debts himself he would pay them for him. The last accounts we had from Atooi, all the chiefs and people had returned to the mountains to cut wood. Tamoree's former Queen now rules at Atooi, the Brig is called hers, and she holds herself obligated to pay for it. We have her name to the obligation. As I have written you before, our most bitter and professed enemy at Atooi is Mr. George Tamoree, one of the most finished rascals the islands afford. His last act of villainy has completely established his infamy. Captain Masters came up here the last week, his dwelling house having been destroyed by fire; and who do you think was the incendiary—no one less than Mr. George Tamoree, and merely because Capt. Masters denied him a bottle of

gin. The amount of property destroyed including officer's wearing apparel, etc., we estimated at \$2300. I immediately called on King Tamoree in an official manner, and stated to him the circumstances, and demanded redress. He was convinced of the magnitude of the crime and his responsibilities for the loss. Accordingly he promised to make good the amount destroyed." And more sandalwood came walking down the hills on the backs of native men and women.

The value of sandalwood was adventitious, though it yielded an enormous profit. On the whole, this commerce tended to demoralize those who engaged in it. In "The Crater," James Fenimore Cooper makes this traffic the pivot of a romance. His hero spends two months cruising about the mighty deeps in search of sandalwood islands. Having found his island, he makes a contract with the natives for specified amounts of the wood and departs elsewhere to return in two or three months for the cuttings. Her holds filled, the vessel proceeds to Canton for the usual commerce with the Chinese. His hero even returns to Philadelphia where, with all due secrecy, he musters a colony for the mid-Pacific. "So long as the sandal-wood lasted, so long would it be in the power of the colonists to coin money; while it was certain that competitors would rush in the moment the existence of this mine of wealth should be known."

Had the natives remained in their blissful innocence of the true value of sandalwood, there would doubtless have arisen no misunderstandings between them and the whites. But along with the inrush of competitors for the wood and the less selfish concern of the missionaries, troubles enough were soon brewing. Bloodshed could not long be averted. The loss of life in this traffic throughout the South Sea Islands at one time exceeded the toll taken by the leviathan. It was ranked as one of the most hazardous of callings. The whaling industry, while it made large returns, demanded industry, courage, perseverance, and a fair amount of capital. But there was so much to be gained from speculation in the wood that men became reckless.

During the height of the traffic it meant affluence and prof-

ligacy to the chiefs who in all their days had never dreamed of such easy wealth. In one year alone more than \$400,000 worth of wood had been cut. Before 1820 it was being shipped somewhat steadily, but then, with the acquired tastes for luxury, it began to be cut not only indiscriminately but wastefully, without adequate places for storing it, or consideration for the well-being of the natives who, in poverty and in excess of their energy, were driven through direct taxation to bringing down more and ever more sandalwood. In an effort to gain control of the trade, the king, in a moment of sobriety, thought he would engage in the shipments himself direct with China, seeing how rich the foreign merchants were becoming. So he dispatched a vessel to Canton, under British officers and a native supercargo—the first to carry the Hawaiian flag into any port in the world. But through the dishonesty of those in charge the profits were spent in riotous living in China, and the ship came back to the king \$3,000 in debt for the voyage. So the king determined to establish pilot and customs duties by way of recuperation for the loss his kingdom was enduring, but again the profligacy of his son Liholiho, to whom life was one long day of merrymaking, carried them further on to ruin, until through extortion, rapine, and neglect of tilling the soil the country was virtually ravaged and despoiled. Once the king swore off drinking and would have kept his promise, but he was enticed on board a vessel and assured that cherry wine was harmless—and all his vows went overboard. It was not till 1830 that any constructive conscientious effort on the part of the rulers—this time the Governor of Oahu, Kuakini—sought to banish liquor from the islands. Though he bent over backward, he was able only slightly to curtail, not to eliminate, the evil.

But for ten years another influence was at work, as alien to the Hawaiians as the evil that was consuming them—the labours of the missionaries.

## 3

From the beginning there were not a few pious people who looked upon the traffic in sandalwood with compunction.

“Sandalwood,” says Cooper, “was . . . a branch of commerce, by the way, which ought never to be pursued by any Christian man or Christian nation, if what we hear of its uses in China can be true. There it is said to be burned as incense before idols, and no higher offence can be committed by any human being than to be principal, or accessory, in any manner or way, to the substitution of any created thing for the ever-living God.” But if the pious had had their way, where would the poor trader have found anything that did not minister to some alien idol? Where is the poor trader going to get a living if the pious have their way? And so all the blame for all the troubles at the time was heaped upon the missionary.

From the time of the first discovery of the heathen after the trader came into the Pacific, American hearts had been pulsating with a cosmic consciousness, and the souls of those heathen became their daily concern. The trader had been followed thither by the whaler, and the whaler by the gospeller, and before very long the hitherto misty, stormy, aquatic wilderness became the world’s first melting pot for deserters, castaways, absconders, and transplanted merchants, to which were soon added the missionary and the diplomat.

In 1819, the first boat-load sailed from Boston with a band of singing pilgrims who were bent not upon a place wherein they could practise their own beliefs in their own way, but on unrelenting war upon the faiths of savagedom. The effort had begun with the mission school in Connecticut, which the Reverend John Pierpont, grandfather of the Morgans, of Litchfield, Connecticut, commemorated in a poem from which we cull the following:

For Orient queens their radiance to throw,  
With gold and silver, from a rich trousseau.

The historian of the occasion tells us: “In 1817 the Foreign Mission School was established in Cornwall (Connecticut). The origin of the effort, if not accidental, was gradual in its conception. Two young natives of the Sandwich Islands were by the directing and almost visible hand of Providence thrown

among us and fell under the notice of Mr. Elias Cornelius, in 1815. . . . The names of these young heathen, as known among us, were Henry Obookiah and William Tanoe. They were not long after joined by Thomas Hopoo, their countryman. . . . A more liberal and enlarged project was conceived; a Seminary in a Christian land for the instruction of the heathen, joined with the purpose. . . . Young natives of the Sandwich Islands, from China, Australasia, and from the Indian nations on this continent, as well as American youths, were instructed here."

By 1819, these three converts from Hawaii sailed for home with seven missionaries on the ship *Thaddeus*, and on March 31, 1820, they arrived off Kohala. The first officer of the brig was James Hunnewell, agent of Bryant & Sturgis for Hawaii. Reports on the very pious state of Tahiti as a result of British missionary efforts had stirred American ambitions. "No fire in canoes on Sunday," read the report, "no journey, no weekly business, all their former sports and amusements completely put down. You would be charmed by a Tahitian Sabbath. Oh England, blush at thy own inferiority in this respect, with this so lately barbarous land!" How those Tahitians did fall for rest days!

What then was their amazement when Mr. Hunnewell returned from a reconnoitring trip to Kohala to the *Thaddeus* with the announcement: "Liholiho is king; the tabus are abolished; the idols are burned; the temples are destroyed. There has been war, but now there is peace."

This miracle had occurred the year before, when, at a feast (from which women were not to be debarred), prepared by Kaahumanu, Liholiho had joined a number of other chiefs and had eaten in the presence of the multitudes. Seeing no blast from Heaven descending upon him for the breaking of the tabu against eating with women, the people raised a joyful shout, "The tabus are at an end and the gods are a lie!"

These good tidings sent the *Thaddeus* merrily on its way to Kailua, where on April 4, 1820, it came to anchor abreast the "large heathen village." A multitude of shouting natives

in a state of nature, including the king and his queens, were playing on the beach and sporting in the turf—as only Hawaiians can—laughing heartily. The missionaries, observing their nakedness, were shocked by the “appalling darkness of the land we had come to enlighten.” . . . The more white people came, the more appalling became the darkness.

That the catch which brought Kaahumanu into the fold was not an inconsiderable one we have on the evidence of an eyewitness, Laura Fisher Judd, wife of the famous missionary doctor. She was only twenty-four years old when she landed there in 1828, a bride. The Governor, Manuia, in semi-military fashion and employing a semi-intelligible English, received this new group of missionaries very amiably. He ordered vehicles to convey them to their mission, which was about a mile from Honolulu, the vehicles being a yellow one-horse wagon and two blue handcarts, all drawn by natives. Mrs. Judd says she preferred to walk with her husband. There, shortly after her arrival, the queen, Kaahumanu, came to visit them, to receive them into her realms. Her retinue was large, and included of course the usual *kahili* bearer, the enormous feather fan or umbrella, and “still another [bearing] her spittoon.” Her Majesty rode backward, with her feet hanging down behind the cart, displaying ankles which Mrs. Judd declares, upon her honour, to have measured eighteen inches in circumference, while the cart was loaded with 400 pounds of royalty in one magnificent bundle. We further learn that after the feast of reason had satisfied the queen “a sound something between a whistle and the groan of a blacksmith’s bellows” was heard and the august lady announced her desire to return. “She rose (I never saw her look so tall), gathered up the ample folds of her black silk dress, even to the very waist, holding a portion on each arm, and exposing an undergarment of beautiful pink satin. Thus she stood in her stateliness, while we gathered around to shake hands and bid her good-night.”

The friendliness and intimacy between the missionaries and the natives could not, in the circumstances, but create trouble

with the traders. The traders had set out to help the missionaries. "Tell the missionaries," wrote Bryant & Sturgis to Captain John Suter, "that we shall bring the frame of their house in the *Tartar* free of freight, and as we do so much for them, they must aid you if they can." So far the coöperative spirit between missionary and trader was in excellent order.

But many years had not gone by before a change came over the Hawaiian world. The non-ecclesiastical *émigrés* found this transplantation of Boston a little too much to swallow. They could put up with the hair-cloth furniture easily enough, and might even favour the "frame houses shipped round the Horn," but when it came to the New England Sabbath their endurance was strained excessively. The missionaries were forgetting too easily what they owed the traders at home.

"The effects of the few zealous missionaries," said Captain Beechey, "are tending, as fast as possible, to lay waste the whole country, and plunge the inhabitants into Civil War and bloodshed. Thousands of acres of land that before produced the finest crops, are now sandy plains. Provisions are so extremely scarce, that not long since, the king sent to beg a little bread of the American Consul; the fishery is almost deserted, and nothing flourishes but the missionary school." The American "Consul" was one Mr. Jones.

"The natives are too much enlightened," wrote Jones to Mr. Marshall of Boston. "They know well the value of every article. If they do not there are plenty of canting, hypocritical missionaries to inform them, even though unasked. Trade will never again flourish at these islands till these missionaries from the Andover mill are recalled. They are continually telling the king and chiefs that the white traders are cheating and imposing on them. Consequently they have depreciated the value of most articles. I believe that it is a fact generally acknowledged by all here that the natives are fifty per cent. worse in every vice since the missionaries began their hypocritical labours here. These blood-suckers of the community had much better be in their native country gaining their living."

The year after, Jones, who was to be treated civilly, wrote again to his chief: "All business, all occupation, all labour have ceased and religion, the most absurd and unreasonable, stalks throughout this land, spreading desolation and misery. The missionaries have succeeded in frightening these poor simple children of nature into the belief of a religion they do not understand themselves—the creed of which is a libel on the goodness of God. . . . The sound of the church-going bell is heard from the rising to the setting sun, and religion is rammed down the throats of these poor simple mortals whilst certain famine and destruction are staring them in the face."

After which he goes on to say that he is encouraging civil strife in Hawaii so that he may sell them some guns he has on hand.

Marshall was having difficulties with one of his agents who reported the defamation of the character of the firm: "The infamous scoundrel of a Blanchard has been of the greatest injury to our cause. . . . I have no hesitation to say he is one of the most unprincipled rascals on the face of the earth . . . etc." Of Bingham, the famous missionary, Elwell wrote: "Bingham and family have gone to Ohwyhee for the improvement of his health. There is some hope that he will not survive the climate long. With all my heart I say God send a speedy delivery."

In that raw, unschooled world, where antagonisms reverted to old principles and primitive impulses, where strange codes afforded an easy escape from one realm of existence to another, from one standard of conduct to another, it was a marvel that even so much restraint prevailed. When, in due course, the natives saw their old tabus cast down and defied, when conversions took place by the thousand under the exhortation of Titus Coan, it was not to be wondered at that kings applied new theories to economics in the disposition of uncomfortable debts. And so kings and chiefs went into worldly bankruptcy and when pressed by the foreign traders threw themselves upon the mercy of the foreign God. "He has given himself entirely to God, and wishes nothing to do with earthly con-

cerns," wrote a correspondent. "The king and principal chiefs are in the mountains. The old woman is here, as sanctified as ever."

The traders damned the missionaries, and the missionaries reserved space in a lurid hereafter for the traders. The king discovered that within his domains abounded masters of vessels who regarded themselves as responsible to their owners alone; sailors who defied all temporal and spiritual supremacy; missionaries who held themselves responsible to God and to God alone; and mercenaries whose economic weapon was at least as effective as the authority of all other rulers combined. This was not always disadvantageous, for in their division lay his security, but it did not tend to bring harmony into his realms.

"Some were ruffianly fellows," writes one gentle son of a missionary, "scarcely above the level of pirates and buccaneers, who made a deal of trouble among the unsophisticated Hawaiians. The good missionary fathers were considerably chagrined when later they found their hospitality repaid by the fabrication of imaginative stories that found circulation in New Bedford and along Cape Cod, describing minutely the luxury in which the Hawaiian missionaries were living; how they were clothed in silks and satins, and were gathering to themselves houses and servants and great possessions. But everything is relative; and I dare say that to a worn-out old sea-dog, after six months of imprisonment among rats and cockroaches in the filthy forecastle of a nasty old-fashioned whaleship, any decent habitation, no matter how poor, must have seemed like a palace."

## 4

By 1825, reports of progress began to emanate not only from missionaries, but from business men. "Thus the benefits as well as evils of civilization are greatly spreading throughout these remote regions, leaving the question still undetermined whether savage or cultivated men be most capable of enjoying happiness." The Ten Commandments were in that year recognized by the king as the basis of a code of laws.

Among those who now had to live under this new scheme was a Bostonian (Mr. Benjamin P.), who had left his home to seek a fortune in Canton. Suddenly his letters ceased coming to his family at home, and to discover what had happened to him, his nineteen-year-old son set out for the East. In China he learned that his father had gone to Hawaii, and so pursued him. Upon his arrival he found his father happily sequestered in the bosom of a Hawaiian home, his mate a native princess. His ire was soon turned to envy, and before many a day went by the boy himself had won unto himself a princess, and neither of them ever returned to the land of their fathers.

In time the sandalwood gave out and life settled down to more creative undertakings. Feeding people changed from the custom of calling at meal and grog time to a business of catering, and Mr. Warren set up a "genteel boarding house." James F. Munger assures us that when in doubt as to whether to go to California or remain on the islands, everyone encouraged him in the latter, and he found that there was more money in a dining saloon than in the goldfields. In time, great firms arose, and men of fine calibre took their places within counting-houses. Inter-marriage between the whites and the natives was always encouraged and always indulged. Chinese had arrived, with their hair a yard long, vibrating from side to side as they strode along in their gorgeous costumes and on wooden-soled shoes. Their arrogance in that day earned for them more respect than their humility does to-day. A contemporary was so moderate in his regard for them that he noted: "The colour of these Chinese is more sallow than that of Europeans." They were not only the laundrymen, but bakers too, and even wits, for one advertised:

Good people all, come near and buy  
Of Sam and Mow, good cake and pie,  
Bread, hard and soft, for land and sea,  
"Celest" made, come buy of we.

Hawaii had graduated from its status as the suburb of Boston and became, what it has always remained, the Pearl of the Pacific.

## 5

Thus backward and forward across the waters of the Pacific man was weaving the fabric of civilization. A certain Doctor Lathrop, a short, stout, and kindly tempered little man, returned to America with a handsome fortune. His son George, a lively little fellow, grew up to marry a daughter of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Interest in the two regions grew more mutual and more intimate. Mothers who had dispatched their boys and never heard from them again gave stir to an agitation for the naval patrol of the Pacific to hunt for stranded Americans by some believed to be held in slavery by the savages, or waiting hopelessly for some chance visitation of a vessel.

Hawaiians had begun slowly to make their way to Boston. Amaso Delano tells in his voyages that he had been induced to take away with him from Hawaii a boy who had served to fan one of the wives of a Hawaiian king. "To the boy I gave the name of 'Bill' and brought him with me to Boston, where his merits were duly appreciated, and he was generally known. . . . He performed on the Boston stage several times in the tragedy of Captain Cook and was much admired by his audiences and the public in general." But when Delano subsequently returned to Hawaii without the lad, the earlier friendliness manifested toward him was turned to sullen distrust and hate.

The Hawaiians, converted, were looking abroad to their fellow Polynesians. James Hunnewell quotes a vivid description by an Hawaiian of his efforts to convert the Marquesans. "We came away to seek the salvation of the souls of this people because our hearts were full of the love of God. . . . When I saw your countryman, a citizen of this great nation, ill-treated and about to be baked and eaten as a pig is eaten, I ran to save him, full of pity and grief at the evil deed of this benighted people. I gave my boat for the stranger's life. This boat came from James Hunnewell. A gift of friendship, it became the ransom of a countryman of yours, that he might not be eaten by savages who know not Jehovah."

But a still more touching picture comes to us when the Hawaiians, led to believe that all people in the Christian lands knew joy and happiness, and that all Christians, like the missionaries, were kind, made their way to Boston as to some distant Arcadia. Educated by the missionaries, many of them came with glowing hopes and wild anticipations. It was easy for them to sign on ships at Hawaii, but when they were paid off in Boston, they were usually dumped into Negro rooming houses (the white men's houses would not receive them) and, after three or four days of furious dissipation expressly prepared for the sailor, they were turned out upon the streets, homeless, penniless, and often shivering in the raw sunshine, and looking at the blank gray houses and harsh white faces in vain for friendliness. With so many white sailors to choose from they were seldom re-engaged by the ships. Heartsick, bewildered, shivering with cold, they wandered around the streets, living comfortably enough during the brief summer on the warm country highways where blackberries and strawberries grew and a farmer's vegetables and fruit could now and then be harmlessly pilfered. But in winter they were the most miserable of ailing and tortured animals, slinking here and there into shelters only to be kicked out again.

For all this, the papers testify that they remained quiet, inoffensive, never disturbing public peace, nor joining in mutinies and full of reverence through it all for the missionaries who had taught them and whose prototypes they kept hoping to find in this dreary land.

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## CHAPTER IX

MOBY DICK

“Oh, Starbuck! it is a mild, mild wind, and a mild looking sky. On such a day—very much such a sweetness as this—I struck my first whale—a boy-harpooner of eighteen! Forty—forty—forty years ago!—ago! Forty years of continual whaling! forty years of privation, and peril, and storm-time! forty years on the pitiless sea! for forty years has Ahab forsaken the peaceful land, for forty years to make war on the horrors of the deep!”—HERMAN MELVILLE.

HOWEVER neatly Salem and Boston may have halved the Pacific Ocean between them, there was another group of Americans that by the testimony of Herman Melville, who knew all about it, could still claim seven eighths of the globe as their own. These were the whalemens who appeared in the war under the escort of the Salem frigate, the *Essex*. The *Essex* had been built in response to a public notice that was posted in Salem in 1798 when the Americans were having so much trouble with the French ships.

“To the Sons of Liberty: All true lovers of Liberty step forth and give assistance in building a frigate to oppose French insolence and piracy. Let every man in possession of a white oak tree be ambitious to be foremost in hurrying down the timber to Salem where the noble structure is to be fabricated to maintain your rights upon the seas. . . . Your largest and longest trees are wanted, and the arms of them for knees and rising timber.”

A little later a second notice appeared, thanking the people of Essex County for their “spirited exertions in bringing down the trees of the forest for the frigate.”

In 1812, the *Essex*, in command of Captain Porter, was on her way to join two other ships in a cruise in Far Eastern waters, and heard that British vessels had captured some American

whalemen in the South Pacific and were in pursuit of the rest. Whereupon, on his own initiative, Porter rounded the Horn and went speeding after both captor and captive. He succeeded in rescuing the Americans, and then proceeded on a retaliatory cruise of his own, in which he practically drove all the British whalers off the Pacific. From then on, for the next sixty years, the American whaler was virtually supreme in those waters.

Aside from the earnings which poured into humble American homes from the pursuit of the leviathan, there trailed in their wake traditions and myths that have worked their way into the consciousness of the entire country. While the Indiamen, down to the winged clippers, ensnared the merchant and captivated the mind with their swift, direct journeyings to and from the East, the ponderous, tubby, cumbersome whalers were rolling hither and yon over the lone and trackless seas. The gold and the silks and gems of the East fired the hopes of avarice; the whalers had little to dream of besides the chance harpooning of a fish full of ambergris. To them the ambergris was the Gold of Ophir.

The profits of the East India merchants which dazzle the fancy, significant though they are in the development of the New World, dwindle before the far-reaching achievements of the whalers. They in their venturesomeness, knowing no intimidation, plunged into uncharted seas and hovered about even the forbidden waters of Japan. To them is primarily due the sweeping of the Pacific of all its terrors and the throwing into the discard of the thought of any national isolation. The oft-quoted passage from Burke appraising the place of the whaler in the geography of human expansion was printed by the *New-York Packet* on May 18, 1787.

“Whilst we trace them among the tumbling mountains of ice,” said Burke, “and behold them penetrating into the deepest frozen recesses of Hudson’s Bay, and David Straits; whilst we look for them beneath the arctic circle we hear that they have pierced into the opposite region of polar cold, that they are at the Antipodes, and engaging under the frozen serpent of the

south. Falkland Island, which seems too remote and romantic an object for the grasp of national ambition, is but a stage and a resting-place in the progress of their victorious industry. Nor is the equinoctial heat more discouraging to them than the accumulated winter of both poles. We know that while some of them draw the line and strike the harpoons upon the coast of Africa, others run the longitude and pursue their gigantic game along the coast of Brazil. No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries. No climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise, ever carried this most perilous mode of hardy industry to the extent to which it has been pursued by these recent people:—a people who are still as it were but in the gristle and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood.” A few years later he would have had to include numerous previously unknown regions of the Pacific in his forensic survey.

For their enterprise brought into the Pacific and Far Eastern waters towns and communities not otherwise engaged in the China trade—Nantucket, Martha’s Vineyard, New Bedford, New London, and New Haven. Everyone from Cape Cod to Long Island had tried to intercept an occasional whale, and it is even said that the Pilgrim Fathers took to the Rock because they spied whales about it. But the Quaker in particular, debarred from battle and bloodshed, found in the war with the leviathan an outlet for energies inherited from Beowulf who killed the terrible beast of the marshes, and kinship to St. George who slew the dragon; and in justification of this inconsistency could doubtless quote Isaiah, wherein he found: “In that day, the Lord with his sore, and great and strong sword, shall punish Leviathan the piercing serpent, even Leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.” Then, prospering by the grace of God, having taken a dozen towns into the Pacific, they felt impelled to bring back as many compounded; and harpooned Alaska, Japan, and Hawaii, not to mention the four hundred or more islands whose discovery lies to their credit.

For years they had searched out every islet of those seas, pouring their hoardings of fat into the candle moulds of America, and turning tons of bone into straitjackets for the ladies.

Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,  
Tho' stiff with hoops and armed with ribs of whale.

The insatiable demand for corsets and candles kept the whalers, as it kept Ahab, with hardly an hour at home.

## 2

By 1819 they had almost exhausted every field and were lolling about Hawaii, where at least they could keep warm and taste of transplanted Puritan delights. While thus engaged, it chanced that Captain Winship, of Brighton, Massachusetts, looking in on his way home from Canton, announced that he had seen a school of sperm whales off the islands of Japan. As fast as their sails could be unfurled two whalers struck out for the Japan seas. The *Syren* and the *Maro* got there first and fell to slaughtering so vigorously that within three months both vessels were full to the hatches and floated back to Nantucket. There they reported the strange story of the Japanese who, locked within their warm waters, defied the world to touch their sacred soil.

In a little time the Japanese whaling grounds were buzzing with activity. In November of 1823 twenty-two whalers were in the harbour of Hawaii "which almost produced a famine." Ten years later 1,200 ships and 30,000 men were employed in the Pacific whaling business and in the India and China trade, says Forbes. So plentiful had whale oil become that the ever larger and heavier ships built to bring the blubber home to Nantucket began to refuse to pass the bar. In a short time the whalers were compelled to land their caskets at New Bedford, across Buzzards Bay.

The record of the whaleship *Envoy* will give some idea of the wealth in oil that lay floating around the proscribed waters of Japan. She was built in 1833, 392 tons capacity, and sailed under Captain Clark to return on January 1, 1838, after an

absence of four years, with 2,100 barrels of sperm oil worth \$57,887. Her last cruise was in 1847, but she cleared \$200,000, or \$12,000 a year on an original investment of \$35,000. A certain Captain Walker then purchased her for \$8,000, and she sailed from New Bedford with a cargo of oil for Manila and thence to London, the profit of the voyage being \$9,000. So she went cruising again and in less than two months took 2,800 barrels of whale oil and bone. Of this haul Walker shipped 1,800 barrels of oil and 40,000 pounds of bone to London and realized a net profit of \$37,500. On a subsequent cruise she got 2,500 barrels of oil and 35,000 pounds of bone which she this time disposed of at San Francisco, in 1851, for \$86,000. Returning to New Bedford she was sold for \$6,000, so that an investment of \$8,000 netted Captain Walker \$130,500.

This state of things continued in the whaling industry unabated for thirty years. The total value of the trade in 1835 was \$6,000,000; in 1854, it reached its peak at \$10,802,594.20. Between 1804 and 1876 the whalers were enriched to the extent of \$331,947,480.51. By reason of a good harbour New Bedford drew to herself all the whaling skill of Nantucket, so that in 1857 she had a fleet of 329 vessels, valued at \$12,000,000 and manned by 12,000. Her entire whaling industry represented an investment of more than \$70,000,000 and 70,000 persons derived their sustenance from it. One Negro, Lewis Temple, made his fortune turning out a new kind of harpoon which was so arranged that it sank very easily into the flesh of the whale, but turned at right angles to the shank and became permanently fixed in the carcass as the monster tugged in his fury. In New London, an old bachelor popularly referred to as Sebastian made more than ten million dollars in whaling, though his end of the industry was entirely the handling of the whalers' cash.

Of all the far-flung enterprises whaling was the most vital. In spite of the heavy losses it entailed as part of the ordinary hazards of the pursuit, it was not till the very elements joined in its destruction, abetted by the discovery of other fuels, that it abated. Staved boats and sunken ships, the partial retribution

wreaked upon them by infuriated whales, often the kindest fate—these tales give only the less tragic accounts of the life of the whaler. The worst have doubtless never reached the ears of man. The last great flock of whaleships caught, in 1871, in the ice floes of the Arctic and crushed within that frozen maw, wrecking thirty-five whaleships and endangering the lives of 1,200 men, women, and children, every one of whom was eventually saved—that was the manner in which whaling made its exit from the stage of American life.

## 3

And yet, of all these enterprises in the Pacific, none is more alive in the minds of men to this day than that of whaling. While one must storm the doors of proud mansions, once the homes of China merchants, for their secrets, the facts of the whaling exploit are visible at every corner of the old cities. "Captain said" is still a kind of incantation which overcomes all incredulity. In those voluminous logs which every captain kept as though he meant to build up a case against the elements—musty, illegible, misspelled, and ungrammatical ledgers of the weather—one sees crude drawings of whales in black ink. Each drawing records a catch. But nearly as many of these picture records show only the perpendicular tails of the leviathans, indicating thereby that the monsters sounded. Once, to offset such a disaster perhaps, the captain recorded: "To-night the old sow delivered 9 piggs." He added a picture of the sow that looked more like a cow. . . . It was a hard, harsh, disappointing, lonely life, made more barren to us by the brevity of these jottings. But the whalers were on the whole better off than other sailors, for their emotional lives had their roots in good homes. They were part of sober communities, not the outcasts of the deep, as so many common sailors were.

Only a few cherished ruins remain to tell of whaling. During our stay in New Bedford we went out to see the *Morgan*, one of the oldest of the whaleships, which had been featured in the play, "Down to the Sea in Ships." The glory of that final triumph was already gone, and she lay quite deserted, lashed to

a lonely wharf, rotting at her keel. The same day the *Wanderer* returned, one of the few old-time whaleships still on the seas. The *Wanderer* set out for another trip, seeking the open seas once more, but she foundered within sight of her home port, just off Nantucket, and, as some said, Romance then gave up the ghost.

And now Edgartown, Nantucket, Mystic—all dream away their allotment of eternity, their white homes fresh with paint, their spacious interiors refurbished for a more fastidious generation. Gorgeous mansions top the hills from New Bedford to New London. “Nowhere in America,” wrote Herman Melville, even seventy-five years ago, “will you find more patrician-like houses; parks and gardens more opulent than in New Bedford. Whence came they? How planted on this scoria of a country? Go and gaze upon the iron emblematical harpoons round yonder mansion, and your question will be answered. Yes, all these brave houses and flowery gardens came from the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian oceans. One and all they were harpooned and dragged up hither from the bottom of the sea.”

## 4

The legends of whaling go on developing though the industry is dead, as a recent event has shown. On the fourth of July, 1918, the little town of Fairhaven, Massachusetts, opposite New Bedford, was decked with a gaiety excessive even for war-time exuberance of feeling. Bunting linked corner grocery with church steeple, and garage with the public library, weaving a fabric of communal splendour that at once took in plutocrat and plebeian, republican and shintoist, until the contagion touched the very ends of the earth. Patriotism wedded internationalism for the duration of the day, and predominant among the flags of the Allies hung the starry firmament of the American flag whose glittering was not in the least dimmed by the all-conquering sun of the Japanese emblem, drawn to each other as in some new kind of cosmos of heavenly love. And what was it all about? The Armistice was as yet unthought of; the Fourth of

July was referred to by only two out of the seven speakers; the World War was set aside—there was something more to the moment than all these.

President Wilson thought the occasion important enough especially to exempt the Japanese Ambassador—Viscount Ishii—from attendance at the Mt. Vernon exercises he was himself conducting. After all, what could a representative of one of the oldest autocracies say on the birthday of a democracy? Premier Terauchi had just hinted at a possible alliance between Germany, Russia, and Japan. Here was a chance openly to counteract that threat by the commemoration of a kind deed. So Ishii came up from Washington to New Bedford; and, waiting for him at the Fairhaven end of the bridge to welcome him, stood one Calvin Coolidge, Lieutenant Governor of the State.

Before the parade had halted at the high school later in the day where the exercises were to be held, those who were and those who were not descendants of whale men were living again mentally in the early part of last century during the height of the whaling enterprise in the waters of Japan.

For in 1841 a Japanese boy named Manjiro Nakahama had gone fishing with a number of his townspeople in a smack that by governmental interdiction had been forbidden to go out of sight of the mainland. A storm arose and carried them far into the Pacific and flung them upon a rocky little island, the habitat only of sea-birds and turtles. Other men had been wrecked before, but if they were not sought they were at least pitied. These Japanese, according to the law of the land, could expect neither aid nor mercy from their rulers. Even if by great good fortune they were rescued, they could never hope to return to their native land, for death was the punishment meted out to any one who had stirred abroad. Moreover, since the prohibition had the effect of keeping foreign vessels out of those regions, the likelihood of being picked up was thereby minimized. With only such prospects as these, the Japanese castaways survived for six months on birds' eggs and turtle.

Meanwhile, the Fairhaven whaleship *John Howland* was cruising about the whalefields, 20,000 miles away from home. For two years it had not been home. On the 27th of June, 1841, Captain Whitfield "sent in two boats to see if there was any turtle" on a little island near Japan, and "found 5 poor distressed people" whom he took with him, though he "could not understand anything from them more than that they were hungry." Ordinarily, he might have turned in the direction of Japan, where he of course knew they belonged, but he was well aware of the risk, for five years earlier the *Morrison*, bent upon a similar mission, had been fired upon and driven out. So he kept them with him during the next four months' cruising, and put them ashore in Honolulu.

It might all have ended there, had it not been that Captain Whitfield took rather kindly to the boy Manjiro, who, for want of a simpler name, had been christened John Mung. Manjiro acted as cabin boy and showed unusual aptitude. When he begged to be taken along, the captain, who had sons of his own, yielded to the youth's persuasion and brought him to America, where no Japanese had ever been seen.

In the little village of Fairhaven, the diminutive stranger soon enjoyed all the prominence which his sallow skin and slit eyes gave him. Placed in school by the captain and apprenticed to the cooper's craft, he entered into the social life of the town as a member of a respected family. He was bright, especially in mathematics and navigation, and took a keen interest in all the activities of the community. So six years went carelessly by.

But the home hunger began to grow more keen. Manjiro was now a young man with little prospect of putting his knowledge to wider use. There was, after all, little enough for a native of Fairhaven to do besides whaling, let alone a Japanese. As a cooper he could earn his living, and, possibly, make his way back to his native land. So he secured a job on the *Franklin* and sailed again into the Pacific. Two years later, when the gold rush occurred, he shared in the fortunes of other diggers and laid aside a little cash. At last, in the tenth year of his

exile, he had himself and three of his fellow-castaways lowered to the sea in a whaleboat off the Loo Choo Islands, and dropped out of American life.

Another ten years went by. Japan was now accessible to the world, but no word came from Manjiro. The barriers had been broken down for those who wished to enter; but to those who wished to leave there were still the same barrier habits of mind. Yet, during this second decade there remained in Fairhaven the natural curiosity—"I wonder if he is alive. I wonder what he is doing now." Then there arrived a quaint letter, which solved this little mystery.

"SANDWICH ISLAND, *May 2, 1860.*

"CAPTAIN WILLIAM H. WHITFIELD.

"MY HONORED FRIEND—I am very happy to say that i had an opportunity to say to you a few lines. I am still living and hope you were the same blessing. i wish to meet you in this world once more. How happy we would be. Give my best respect to Mrs. and Miss Amelia Whitfield, i long to see them. Capt. you must not send your boys to the whaling business; you must send them to Japan, i will take care of him or them if you will. Let me know before send and I will make the arrangement for it.

"Now I will let you know how am i arrived to my Native Country. You know that i have been to the Gold Mine; here stayed 4 month, average eight Dolls per day, beside expenses, from here i made my mind to get back and to see Dear Mother and also Shiped in one of the American Merchant men. In this vessel i arrived to Sand which Island. I found our friend Mr. Damon and through his kindness bought a whale boat and put her into a Merchant-man. This vessel was going to Shanghai in China.

"It was January very cold that part of country; Time i went on shore south off Great Loo Choo it was gail with snow. The Capt. of vessel he wish me to stay with him and to go to China, but i refused it, because i wanted to see Mother. The boat is ready for me to get in, myself, Denново & Goyesman

jump in to the boat, parted with ship at 4 P. M. After ten hours hard pull we arrived lee of Island and anchored untill morning. I went on shore amongst the Loo Choose, but i cannot understand their language, i have forgot all Japanese words. I stay here six months, under care of the King of Loo Choo, waiting for Japanese junk to come.

“In the month of July get on board junk and went into the Harbour of Nagashirki Island, off Kie-u-see-u, waiting to get permission for 30 month before we get to our residence. After all the things is properly regulated we were send to our residence. It was great joy to Mother and all the relation. i have stay with my Mother only 3 day and night the Emperor called me to Jedo. Now i became one emperian officer. At this time i am attached this vessel.

“This war steamer were send by Emperor of Japan to the Compliment of the President of America. We went to San Francisco, California, and now homeward bound, at Sandwhich to touch Island to secure some coal and provition. I wish to send the letter from San Francisco but so many Japanese eyes i can't. i wrote this between passage from San Francisco to Island. Excuse me many mistakes. i can write better after our arrived Japan Jedo.

“I wish for you to come to Japan, i will now lead my Dear Friend to my house, now the port opened to all the nations. I found our friend Samuel C. Damon. We was so happy each other I cannot write it all. When get home I will write better acct. I will send to you sut of my clothe. It is not new, but only for remember me.

“I remain your friend,

“JOHN MUNGERO (*May 25, 1860.*)

One thing John Mung fails to tell in his letter. The omission was supplied by the Japanese Ambassador:

“When the Perry Mission from the United States landed at Uraga in 1853, Manjiro served as interpreter. No more suitable person could have been found in all Japan. Manjiro knew

the American spirit and desires. Any blunder on his part might have resulted in an international disaster. As it was, the Perry Mission was a great success."

This statement is amplified with diplomatic locution. Perry barely mentions Manjiro, and as a matter of fact the negotiations were carried on through Dutch interpreters. Nor was it either likely or possible for disaster to occur, considering the circumstances of that visit, as we shall see in a later chapter. Nevertheless, in this instance, the Ambassador leaned toward wisdom rather than error, for men of his profession are only too prone to ignore the subtle influences of ordinary men. And there is no need to doubt that the grateful account of Manjiro Nakahama, spread throughout that terrified land, went far toward allaying the apprehension of the black squadron which had so suddenly steamed into the quiet harbours of Japan.

The succeeding years did not obliterate this gratitude, nor did the intercourse between the Nakahamas and the Whitfields slacken in friendliness. When in 1870 Nakahama came to America as one of a Japanese mission, he again visited his Fairhaven friends, and there are those still living who can recall his coming. His own success in his native land as a professor at the Imperial University of Tokyo, so largely due to this strange experience, never weakened his gratitude to the old captain.

When Manjiro died gratitude was kept fresh by his children. His eldest son, Toichiro Nakahama, felt that he ought in some way to perpetuate that regard. In a manner most typical to a Japanese he felt that a gift of an ancient samurai sword would most truly symbolize the act of Captain Whitfield. It was this sword that Viscount Ishii had come to bring to Fairhaven. So now at the Millicent (Rogers) Library of Fairhaven there lies this sword, together with the quaint letter of Manjiro illustrated with Japanese drawings. And we cannot do more than accept it in the spirit in which it was given, however much the world may vary in its regard for the material form which the symbol took.

This naïve record of affection and gratitude touched everyone who attended the presentation. The orators of the day, somewhat misjudging their own feelings, attempted to rise to some amplitude of oratory; to discover in it some deep significance and grave international import. "We are met," said Mr. Coolidge, in words whose intention is better than their rhetoric, "to assess the dimensions of a kind deed." It remains for posterity to tell whether their judgment was as good as their intentions. Generations will reflect upon it as they see the sword there in the Library, in mute competition with those innumerable "pens" all about it. The story it tells is not history, though every word happens to be true. It is part of the imperishable stuff of folklore by which the popular imagination clings to the records of outward acts. "We are here," said one of the speakers of the day, "because an American was kind and a Japanese remembered." Across those differences which are said to divide the East from the West, many have been kind and many have remembered. This story by reason of a fortunate symmetry in its outlines and the articulate drama in its conclusion, stands, in the collective mind, as the type and symbol of them all.

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## CHAPTER X

### FREETHOUGHT AND SPECULATION IN TEA

**B**ETWEEN the lawless days of sandalwood and furs and the last grand fireworks of the clipper, gold rush, and opium era, there came a period of rampant speculation followed by greater concentration of power in the hands of great merchants like Stephen Girard of Philadelphia and John Jacob Astor. Though Far Eastern crews were still recruited from among the Yankees and a good deal of stock was owned in New England, New York and Philadelphia became the real centres of the trade.

Since the days when the *Empress of China* was financed by Robert Morris, Philadelphia had always occupied one of the most prominent positions in the whole trade. Phineas Bond, as we have seen, had believed that Philadelphia would be the only city in America that would rival London in the Indies. It was then, of course, only a fraction of its present size. It still lay upon the banks of the Delaware, and the best business quarters were right near the river. "The commerce of America in 1793," said Cooper in "The Crater," "was already flourishing, and Philadelphia was then much the most important place in the country. Its East India trade, in particular, was very large and growing."

The prospects of the China trade stimulated men like Robert Morris and Benjamin Franklin to daring dreams of a political and social development for America wholly independent of Europe and patterned after China. Seeing that China's isolation was protecting her against European aggression, Robert Morris suggested a similar self-sufficiency for America. "A mandarin signs a passport," he remarked, "for all European ships directed to the commander of two of the Emperor's forts on the river of Canton, nearly in the following words: 'Permit

this barbarian boat to pass. She has —— guns, and —— men, consequently can do the Emperor no harm.' If the government of America could concentrate the force of the country in any one point where occasion required, I think our mandarins might grant similar passports to the rest of the world." Upon which the biographer of Morris, Oberholzer, comments: "While Chinese civilization was a curious ideal for the learned men of the United States to hold before them, it was something of the glamour of unknown and curious places which attracted Morris to the East."

To such an extent were people then influenced by reports of China that the American Philosophical Society of Philadelphia, over which Benjamin Franklin presided for the term of his natural life, was even sure that if we could only "be so fortunate as to introduce the industry of the Chinese, their arts of living and improvements in husbandry as well as their native plants, America might in time become as populous as China, which is allowed to contain more inhabitants than any other country of the same extent in the world."

That glamour held innumerable others in its power. Cooper sends his hero on a quest for riches to the Pacific from Philadelphia. When the lad returns with "real India handkerchiefs hanging out of each pocket of a blue round-about of superfine cloth, besides one around his half-opened, well-formed throat, that was carelessly tied in a true sailor knot," he is the envy of all the boys and the admiration of all the girls in town. And later, when the better parlours introduced hyson tea, the cataclysmic disturbance that resulted nearly wrecked the social life of the day, and those who had shipments of bohea tea might as well go into bankruptcy.

Amidst all these aspirations and social revolutions there passed one man who was the symbol of the entire enterprise, the personal embodiment of the trade. There were any number of others, Smith, Thompson, Jones, but Stephen Girard alone maintained his success, untarnished and undiminished. Thompson failed after wild speculations, as we shall see, and ended his days in prison; Jones, the head of a tremendous East

India-Canton mercantile establishment, finally became Secretary of the Navy in Madison's administration. But Girard sought neither political preferment nor the gambler's gloss, and so there isn't a name in Philadelphia that is more persistent than that of Stephen Girard, in spite of the zeal with which the fathers sought to obliterate every trace of him, as Abraham Ritter charges.

A stranger, an alien, a Catholic by birth and a freethinker by conviction, constantly avoided and almost suspected by the "Friends" and Fathers, there was not a virtue they professed but he practised it, not a laurel they desired but he secured it. When in 1793 the yellow fever ravaged the city, he—the lonely, secluded, almost friendless merchant—took upon himself the terrible task of nursing the diseased, when friends, fathers, mothers, and children deserted them. For months he neglected business for mercy, and attended to his duties with divine indifference to consequences. Yet in the end, says his biographer, all he received was a resolution of thanks.

"This resolution of thanks, once passed, neatly framed and delivered, the city of Philadelphia considered its duty in the premises wholly done. No friendly feeling toward the man, returning pale, thin, and worn, from the house of pestilence and death, prompted her citizens to publicly speak a kindly word for that self-devoted heroism that had just finished the task they dared not undertake. Nor was there afterward found in all her limits, one man courageous enough to devote his pen to Girard's defence when, in later years, public gossips, self-styled biographers, joined the daily press in stigmatizing his honourable name."

Again, when, during the second war with England, the Government found itself so embarrassed for money that there was fear of the war ending in failure because of the need of a few millions, Americans hesitated to subscribe to a government loan until Girard, upon the first approach, "staked his whole fortune on the failing arms of the country of his choice." Yet he,

perhaps more than any other merchant, was losing by the war which crippled overseas commerce. Now and then the loss was spectacularly retrieved. An incident of that war gives in brief an idea of the range and magic of his enterprises. His ship, the *Montesquieu*, worth \$20,000, had been for two years in the Orient. On March 26, 1813, not knowing of the war, she approached the mouth of the Delaware with a boom of cannon like that with which Girard himself had greeted the city thirty-seven years before. Instead of a friendly pilot, however, there appeared a picayune vessel which took the armed *Montesquieu* captive and turned her over to a British man-of-war. Her cargo was worth \$165,000. Girard ransomed her from the British for \$180,000 and owing to the great demand for such goods on account of the war, sold them for \$488,655.

Girard's contacts knew no limits. His ships were everywhere, but mainly in the China trade. So invincible was his financial position that even to this day the authorities of the Port of Philadelphia have to admit that much of the city's importance is due to him. "It has been said that the construction of great modern piers on the Delaware River," says their leaflet, "just above Market Street has brought a partial realization of Stephen Girard's vision of the city of Philadelphia as a world port. Girard's cutters were initiative in promoting maritime trade, and a century ago the old wooden wharves just north of Market Street were noted chiefly as the place for the arrival and departure of the Girard ships then engaged in the Philadelphia-Bordeaux and Philadelphia-East Indian trade. The sturdy old wooden Girard wharves and the Clifford docks for a hundred or more years carried the brunt of the overseas trade. . . . I can recall how difficult it was for traffic to pass up and down this avenue, particularly when it was obstructed by the overhanging jib-booms of the various sailing craft occupying the piers."

In the years that followed the war, Girard turned more fully to the China market for his exploits than ever before. His ships, the *North America*, *Voltaire*, *Rousseau*, *Helvetius*,

and *Montesquieu*, with hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of cargo and specie, made constant and regular voyages in the circuitous manner of the day—to Southern ports for rice and cotton, to Europe, where they were disposed of for Spanish milled dollars, thence to Canton, Java, Batavia, Isle of France, for silks, spices, ebony wood, coffee, and sugar which were again carried to Europe, and again the ships were laden with Spanish milled dollars for Girard's Bank, to offset the drain of specie from America which the other traders were compelled to ship to the China market and the India trade. To Girard, the banker, specie was now more profitable than were the goods he had heretofore imported. He was head of the first private bank in the United States, yet he managed that as successfully as he had his other vast enterprises.

His influence had by now grown world-wide. He was appealed to for assistance by all sorts and conditions of men; and President Monroe asked him for a loan to offset the impending need of selling an estate. Prince Joseph Bonaparte gave him special permission, through the ministration of a friend of his in France, to bring the *Rousseau* into Antwerp direct from China. "I have had the honour of entertaining in my house Prince Joseph Bonaparte who made a short stay within our walls," wrote this man. "I did not allow this opportunity to escape but approached him about the introduction into the port of Antwerp of your ship *Rousseau* from China. I have just received a letter from his Imperial Majesty granting the request."

When Girard died in 1831 he was worth \$7,000,000, and was one of three or four millionaires in America all of whom had made their money almost entirely in the China trade. But Girard, unlike Astor, Peabody, and Derby, had no family. The tragedy of his private life from the time he left his father's home at the age of fourteen to the unfortunate marriage with a woman who lost her mind and spent twenty-five years in a hospital, had turned his interests outwardly to public benefits. And while he toiled like a galley slave all those sixty-five years which netted him an incredible fortune, he determined to



*Blind of one eye though he was, Stephen Girard saw farther than  
any of the great China merchants of his time*



leave the greater part of it for the founding of a college for orphans and for the beautification of Philadelphia. His leanings toward the free thought of the age—he was a follower of Voltaire and a friend of Jefferson and Thomas Paine—made him determine to keep religious teaching out of this college so that, as he said in his will, the minds of the children will not be confused by denominational differences and ecclesiastical hair-splitting. To that end he declared in his will that not only should no religious doctrine be taught in the college, but no minister or representative of any established church was ever to be permitted to cross its threshold; a rule which is still in force. And so it was that one of the first philanthropic institutions in America was fathered by wealth gained from the Indies.

In one of the "Twice-told Tales," Hawthorne tells the story of a man who left a sum of money to endow an annual banquet of great splendour at which were to be feasted the twelve most miserable people in the world. Among the candidates is Stephen Girard, who lays down his millions of China gold in token of his misery. He was, indeed, never a merry figure, yet who shall say that there was less happiness than other men find in all the harshness and tenderness of that strange and solemn life?

## 2

With the death of Girard there was no outstanding personality to prevent the drift of trade from Philadelphia to New York which followed in the natural development of American commerce. For New York in 1830 was still almost wholly maritime in its atmosphere, with no great railroads to tap the as yet undeveloped resources of the interior of the country.

"There now is your insular city of the Manhattoes," says Herman Melville in "Moby Dick," "belted round by wharves as Indian isles by coral reefs—commerce surrounds it with her surf. . . . Look at the crowds of water-gazers there. . . . Posted like silent sentinels all around the town, stand thousands upon thousands of mortal men fixed in ocean reveries,

Some leaning against spiles; some seated upon the pier-heads; some looking over the bulwarks of ships from China. And there they stand—miles of them—leagues, Islanders all, they came from lanes and alleys, streets and avenues. Yet here they all unite. Tell me, does the magnetic virtue of the needles of the compasses of all ships attract them thither?" All through the War of 1812 and far into the '30's, New York's trade with China and the Far East was one of the most lucrative forms of revenue.

So profitable was the trade with the Orient that one New Yorker, F. H. Smith, built for himself a store so large that it was the wonder of the city, out of the returns on a single cargo of tea; and this same merchant once drew a check for more than half a million dollars to pay the government duties. Another China merchant, Isaac Close, lent the Government half a million dollars in 1814. Later on he needed a couple of hundred thousand himself in order to send out the *Frances Henrietta* to China, and approached the Bank of the Manhattan Company for a loan. Unwilling to drag in another endorser for his note, he swore that he was worth \$750,000 and got the loan. But the greatest of all of them was Astor, of whom the reticent Stephen Girard of Philadelphia was constrained to remark that he had "passed through every stage of mercantile life, from small toy-seller to respectable fur dealer, then to the immense China merchant, cracking his half million cargoes of teas as you would a bale of goods."

The Government had realized the importance of the tea trade from the very beginning, and in order to stimulate it permitted the merchants to bring in their cargoes without an immediate payment of duties. This afforded them so much leeway—from six to eighteen months—that they frequently were able to dispatch the same vessel two and three times to China for fresh freight before they were compelled to pay the duty on the first shipment. But they became indebted to the Government for thousands and even millions of dollars. Astor is said to have held more than \$5,000,000 in this way, free of interest, for about twenty years, a more interesting story than the

rumours of the origin of his fortunes in Captain Kidd's treasure, which are still current. But Astor was always solvent and could take chances with a lax government. There were others tragically less so.

Several merchants began to plunge heavily into the importation of tea. As with ginseng in China, so with tea in America—the market was soon overstocked. By 1826 it was glutted. The Government became alarmed and attempted to collect back duties. Thompson of Philadelphia, one of the leading tea merchants, was unable to pay and a distraint was placed upon his goods. Driven to drastic means of raising money, he would pay the duty on a hundred chests, obtain a permit for their release, forge a further permit, and remove a thousand or five thousand packets. Realizing that if he sold such large quantities in Philadelphia he would arouse suspicion, he sent them to New York. He was soon found out and sent to jail, where he shortly afterward died, owing the Government vast sums of money.

Smith of New York was another tea speculator. He and Astor had bought Thompson's tea at a very low rate owing to the latter's failure. Finding himself in a similar position, and being unable to bully the Collector of the Port of New York into remitting his obligations, he moved across to Perth Amboy, New Jersey, where he erected an enormous warehouse, intercepted his vessels as they returned from Canton, and conducted his vast enterprises from the other side of the river. His bookkeeper, by over-valuing the stocks, succeeded, as part shareholder, in making for himself \$150,000, on which he very wisely retired. But in the end, Smith failed, owing the Government \$3,000,000 by way of unpaid duties. The Government never collected, and the story of his fortune, which had passed on to his son-in-law, is replete with tragedy and chagrin.

Smith & Nicolls also failed, owing the Government \$100,000 which was never collected. Astor alone was not caught in the trade lull. He had bought Thompson's tea and had not yet paid for it when the failure came. By turning his cargoes to the Mediterranean he saved himself. Even Boston was af-

fectured, and Perkins withdrew entirely from the tea business. For five years the trade was dead.

So uncertain had trade for a time become that there arose in New York a fraternity of young men who were called Prime Ministers, commercial guides, so to speak, who piloted strangers bent on business through the labyrinthian dangers of Gotham. Educated and suave of manner, where the merchant himself was sometimes uncouth and boorish, they became the confidential advisers and the junior partners of the established merchants. Eventually, they became an unavoidable evil to their financial superiors, if the story is not exaggerated, and no establishment that wanted to get along could safely ignore their advice or refuse to employ them. One of these, Count Metternich, became the owner of a great fortune in this manner. Among the leading firms of the time were Jacob Barker, Archibald Gracie, N. L. & G. Griswold, Talbot, Olyphant & Co., Grinnell, Minturn & Co., though from the very beginning individuals outside the commercial profession undertook to share in such adventures, as did Gouverneur Morris.

The vogue for Chinese goods had tempted men to corrupt practices. Certain scalawags began to undermine the European market with Chinese imitations. The cost of Parisian luxuries having become exorbitant, a man of the name of Carnes conceived the idea of sending samples of these to China, there to be duplicated by the thousand, and then pouring these imitations into the American market. Nothing was too difficult for the Chinese—fans, famous sauces, preserves, sweetmeats, syrups, silks, even attar of roses—all were cleverly reproduced. Even Turkish rhubarb, which used to be imported neatly packed in tins, was imitated. The Chinese packed a yellowish wood that tasted like sumac, which, we are told, was no more harmful than sawdust, but which nevertheless resulted in several deaths among children. But the trick worked; the profit was enormous, several hundred times the cost of real rhubarb, and sometimes as much as 1,000 per cent. Carnes soon possessed a vast fortune, but he overstocked the entire market. Quite unable to dispose of a great quantity of this

counterfeit material he tried to dump it on the South American markets, but was unsuccessful. In the end he was forced to close with heavy losses.

New York went through the chastening influence of plague, fire, war, and failure, none more ruinous than the embargo, and none more spectacular than the failure of Smith. It remained for the great panic of 1837 to bring the city and its China merchants to a saner judgment, and to steer the merchant marine toward the clipper era.

### 3

Though three-quarters of a century has gone by and the modern New York engages in enterprises larger and more exciting than anything then attempted, still the Oriental trade retains a peculiar hold upon the imagination.

Even now, every day, hundreds of Wall Street's busiest men leave their swivel chairs and mahogany desks, their telephones and tickers, their speculations in tape, and go over in shoals to India House for lunch. There they eat oysters and steak, sit in Windsor chairs made of fumed oak, are served by the usual waiter, and smoke the usual cigars. No Madeira wines (at least not openly), no Hindu turbaned boys, no odour of myrrh and incense, no sinuous Oriental dancers—nothing exotic whatever hangs about the place. Yet there is a waiting list of five hundred tired American business men ready to pay an entrance fee of \$250 and a yearly tax of \$175 to join the India House membership. Fifteen hundred Americans from every country in the world pay tribute to India House and draw vicarious rapture from its imperishable though forgotten exploits in the Far East.

For India House represents a curious revival in our own time of a thing long thought dead. Its ancestor was the New York Marine Society, incorporated in London, which died in the Revolutionary War, only to spring into life again as a native as soon as New York had laws to protect it. Then it ceased to function for a century or so. For some years India House has been but an inscription over the door of an old and stately

building in Hanover Square. In 1914, an enthusiast in Far Eastern affairs, Willard Straight, gathered a number of merchants trading in the East, and formed the present institution. There seems to have been scant knowledge as to why the club should be called India House, Inc., but soon the walls of the house were decked with pictures of clipper ships, of forgotten captains and merchants, prints, paintings, models, and relics whose significance has been lost to many of those who treasured them; and men with only their instincts to guide them rushed into the romantic fraternity of pirates, merchant-skippers, and supercargoes of a hundred years ago.

In this very year (1925) the British traders in Indian teas have inaugurated a movement to stimulate greater drinking of tea in America to mitigate the alleged drought created by the Volstead Act. Originally the trade in rum with the West Indies furnished capital for the trade in tea with the East Indies. Will our bootleggers give way to a new generation of bizarre speculators in tea?

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## CHAPTER XI

### HOUQUA AND THE HONG MERCHANTS

THERE is a legend in America that the Japanese are so dishonest that they themselves employ Chinese cashiers in their banks. That this is false need hardly be said; but the way in which the story started is rather interesting. In the days before the Japanese let us into their land, the Chinese were already acquainted with their ways of doing business. The trade between Europe and China was also extensive. For more than a hundred years, the culture, honesty, and urbanity of the Chinese had won for them fame throughout Europe. Their reputation for morality was widespread. The great writers praised them without stint. Voltaire, though he admitted that "the commonality is as rascally as it is with us, that they haggle as much as we do," nevertheless regarded the Chinese as a people of the greatest virtues. All Europe was enamoured of the character and civilization of the Chinese.

When the Americans commenced going to China on their own, after the Revolution, they found not a little of this rascality. Young Boit, the mate of the first Boston ship to get to Canton, recorded that they were extremely shrewd and had to be watched very closely, and when caught in malpractice would say that in a voyage or two more the Americans would understand better this way of doing business in China and would not be taken in again. During the seventy years of trade that intervened between the first arrival of Americans in China and the opening of Japan, there grew up a relationship between the two that wanted nothing in the way of friendship and confidence and good will. And when the Americans, finding that their Chinese clerks were a ready avenue into Japanese business life, took them with them to Japan, their presence

there gave vogue to the story that the Japanese could not be trusted.

But legends do not live on lies. Behind each fable is a fact. And so the story of the integrity of the Chinese has remained unchallenged through the years. Had not the traders found their Chinese clerks responsible, they would not have carried them along with them to a stranger and more uncertain land. And it is the record of those three quarters of a century of intercourse with China, tested by the trials of smuggling, squeeze, war, and national weaknesses, that gave currency to the legend of Chinese reliability, perhaps one of the most unique stories in the annals of foreign trade. And from this contact there have emerged some characters that, though not of the category of soldiers, statesmen, and thinkers, are nevertheless interesting and worthy in themselves of a better fame.

For while the Peabodys and the Astors and the Girards of America were scanning the far horizon for the silks and the teas and the porcelains of China, there were the Houquas, the Mouquas, and the Kingquas of China, seeking ways and means of appeasing the hunger of the Occident for the wealth of the Orient, and allaying the ire and the contempt of their own haughty overlords for the simple traders at their ports. Out of these numerous Chinese merchants with whom the foreigners had to deal there stands one name which had become the symbol of integrity for all Chinese, and that name was Houqua. And as Houqua's reputation spread throughout eastern America, this legend of extreme honesty of the Chinese spread, so that while none knows of Houqua, all know of the trustworthiness he had engendered into an unwanted and even illicit relationship between the East and the West.

It was no easy task for these merchants to maintain their position. There was, in fact, a premium on dishonesty. China disdained the whole trade. The foreigners felt themselves to be scorned peddlers who were unjustly discriminated against, and saw no reason to be fair. They had no confidence in the system devised by the Chinese Government for handling the traffic—a system of monopolies placed in the hands of a dozen

merchants known as *hong* merchants, and the petty Chinese merchants who wanted to deal with the foreigners but were prevented by this monopoly did little to raise their status. And so all round there was every reason for "bootlegging" and none for abstinence.

It is all the more remarkable, then, that there should have appeared so attractive and responsible a figure in Canton as Houqua. Houqua, whose family name was Wu Tunyen, was born in the same year as Napoleon and Wellington—in 1769. He was of humble family, but that in the Chinese code was little against him. At that time, all Europe was engaged in the pleasant task of imitating China and weighing her virtues against their own shortcomings. When Houqua was still a young man in his twenties, his predilection for business and for associating with the foreigners gained for him admission into that exclusive monopoly, the *co-hong*. Wherever he moved, he saw malpractices. Between the Chinese and the foreigners there obtained irritating relationships. The one who could adjust these growing difficulties would secure the leadership of the whole monopoly. Only a young man like Houqua could rise to the occasion; for it needed not only financial ability, but tact and sagacity and refinement and a broader outlook on life. It was becoming obvious that unless these insistent "barbarians" from overseas were treated more equably there would be trouble, and Houqua, with fewer prejudices than all the rest, rose to the occasion. An American, writing home in the first days after the Revolution, said: "It is unfortunately the case here that there is no man to be relied upon but Houqua and he has too much business." His name became a mark of genuineness and excellence that few traders could do without. American merchants offering teas and silks for sale in Boston or Philadelphia could command higher prices if these bore the name of Houqua. Houqua remained a household word in America for half a century, and when the first clipper ship was designed and constructed, it was called the *Houqua*, and a model of it was sent to this venerable merchant of Canton as a gift from his devoted friends in America.

## 2

To understand more clearly the nature of the times we must digress a moment, long enough to examine the attitude of the Chinese Government and the structure of the monopoly it had erected as a barrier between itself and the world of white barbarians. From the very beginning of the trade between Europe and China, the Chinese realized that there existed such a wide gap between these two civilizations that ordinary intercourse was impossible. As superior as we are to-day to China in science and invention, so was China then superior to us in culture and industry. When, however, the Chinese found it difficult to drive off these traders, they decided to control them. To prevent complications and to centralize as much as possible this undesirable commerce, the Government devised the scheme of handing out monopolies for the trade to a limited number of Chinese. These became known as *hong* merchants, and never exceeded thirteen in number. Though they acted more or less as a united body, they were never incorporated, yet they were all mutually responsible for the obligations incurred by any one of these several merchants. If one failed to meet his debts, the rest were by law compelled to settle with the foreign creditor, and were all responsible for the misbehaviour of these undesirable aliens as well. The Government never troubled itself about tariff regulations, relying solely upon its implacable power of squeeze to exact from both the *hongs* and the foreigners all that the traffic could bear. And from 1720 on through 1840, the system worked more or less to the mutual satisfaction of the three groups concerned. The *hong* merchants were the friends of the foreigners and were anxious that a commerce so lucrative should not be interfered with by the officials. Thus before the dignified humbug of the mandarins, the Yankee, British, and Chinese merchants maintained a suave and humorous entente. With the Chinese imperturbable command of temper and their ability to laugh heartily at foreign pleasantries the point of which they could not in the least understand, they managed to pass all foreign inelegancies as things to be

taken for granted from these "sea people" who had been so restless and so foolish and so poor as to traverse wide wastes of water for the sake of trade.

For trade the Chinese had little less than contempt at best. When we see how all Europe hailed the civilization of China as the finest the world had ever seen, the attitude of the Chinese to these crude Europeans does not seem entirely unreasonable. They brought no great magnificence, and as one great English scholar has recently observed, their gifts to the Emperor, standing now in the museum at Peking, are tawdry beside the exquisite works of Chinese art. For mechanics, for whom even Thomas Jefferson had little respect, the Son of Heaven had no respect at all. In one of his numerous scathing edicts, the Emperor said: "The Celestial Empire permits tea, rhubarb, etc., to be sold to keep alive the people of the said nations. Those persons who are annually kept alive thereby are more than ten thousand times ten thousand. How substantial a favour is this!" At another time he declared, with truth: "Our Celestial Empire possesses all things in prolific abundance and lacks no product within its own borders. There was therefore no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians in exchange for our own produce. . . . I do not forget the lonely remoteness of your island, cut off from the world by intervening wastes of the sea, nor do I overlook your excusable ignorance of the usages of our Celestial Empire. . . . Tremblingly obey and show no negligence."

Englishmen and Dutchmen and French had come away from China, to try, later, to imitate in various ways the landscape gardens and porcelains they had seen. But there was little effort on the part of the few Chinese who deigned to go abroad to try to carry similar things back to China. The Chinese were a happy and contented people. A letter by one Chinese reveals the impression the Occident had made on his country. "I felicitate myself," says the writer, "that I was born in China, and constantly think how very different it would be with me, if I had been born beyond the seas in some remote part of the earth, where the people, far removed from the

converting maxims of the ancient kings, and ignorant of the domestic relations, are clothed with the leaves of plants, eat wood, dwell in the wilderness, and live in the holes of the earth; though born in this world, in such a condition I should not have been different from the beasts of the fields. But now, happily, I have been born in the Middle Kingdom. I have a house to live in; have food and drink; and elegant furniture; have clothing and caps, and infinite blessings: truly, the highest felicity is mine."

Through the Portuguese the Chinese had had nearly two hundred years of trade relations with the West, but the impression the Europeans made on them was not improved. They continued to keep them at a distance, compelling them to live by themselves on a promontory overlooking the sea, some sixty miles away from the city of Canton, which they called Macao. As at our Provincetown, so at Macao, the Portuguese kept pretty much aloof, but being close to China they were able to tap that rich reservoir sufficiently to make of the spot an idyllic little settlement. With its narrow, winding streets, paved with smooth flat stones, and palatial houses high upon the hills, it struck all Occidental visitors as a sample of paradise. This mossy old town, harbour of the Goddess A-Ma, situated on a peninsula three hundred feet above the water, frequented by hurricanes but tempered by cool southwest breezes, had become the great emporium for all European commerce in eastern Asia. Commanded by some ineffectual forts, it was likewise provided with thirteen large Catholic churches of a highly ornamental character, which, all observed, had no effect upon its many charming vices. It had quite a Western air about it, with senate house, court house, prison, hospitals of stone and brick, and homes all white and shining and commodious. Here all white men lived a life of semi-feudal splendour, in palatial houses surrounded by large gardens where the white Chinese lilies and old rose bushes, brought there in the middle of the 16th Century from Portugal, grew in a tangle amidst the fountains and small tea houses. Thither all foreigners went for rest and recreation. There and there alone they maintained some-

thing of the culture of Europe enhanced by the riches of Asia. But splendid though it may have been, it could not hold a candle to the luxurious living of the Chinese; and these saw nothing at Macao they could imitate.

For nearly a century before the Americans arrived in Canton, the British were beginning to encroach upon and dominate the trade with China, and in the course of time foreign factories were established close to Canton, and ships, after receiving permission at Macao to proceed up the Pearl River to Whampao, the anchorage at which they stopped, were taken in charge by the *hong* merchants to whom they were consigned and the process of unloading and reloading began. While all this was going on the captains and the supercargoes of the vessels had little to do but pass from one entertainment to another given in their honour. The sailors remained on their vessels, enjoying only occasional jaunts to Canton, but indulging in all the vices that had gathered about Whampao.

And so, affecting to disdain the trade, though enjoying quite keenly the enormous sums of squeeze they obtained, the Government at Peking left all the worries and complications to the *hong* merchants. These had their separate establishments, or *hongs*, in Canton, with great armies of writers, interpreters, book-keepers, coolies, and hangers-on. Besides their private *hongs*, they maintained at the north end of China Street a public hall for all the Chinese merchants, called by the foreigners the Consoo House. This was an exchange, so to speak, in the spacious quarters of which all the public business of the *co-hong* was conducted, and where, on occasion, foreigners were tried in an improvised court.

Adjacent to the Consoo House was Factory Street, in Chinese *Shih-san-heae*, or Thirteen Factory Street, so called for the thirteen foreign factories (warehouses) to which it was parallel. Factory Street was the longest straight street in Canton, and foreigners who slipped clandestinely into the city used it as a compass to guide them out of that teeming labyrinth.

Within the grounds and within the walls of their factories all white men were voluntary prisoners—voluntary only in that

they could at will return to Macao or their native lands. To the officials, from the Viceroy to the Son of Heaven himself, they were *non est* so long as they sought no new privileges or further entrée into the Celestial Realms. For that precautionary purpose there were the *hongs*, an inaccessible barrier between them and greater China. And whichever way the storms came, it was this merchant barrier that received the brunt of the displeasure. They were compelled to maintain a Consoo fund, as it was called, a sort of sinking fund, out of which all demands, either from the Government at Pekin or from foreigners, could be met. They were not permitted to go into debt to foreigners, but they did, else they could hardly have carried on business. During the American Revolution, several of these *hong* merchants owed British merchants some four million dollars, to force payment of which Great Britain dispatched a frigate from India to Canton. And all the merchants jointly were compelled by Pekin to meet this and subsequent obligations.

## 3

By the time the Americans arrived, Houqua was already the senior *hong* merchant, and as such he bore not alone the advantages of his position, but most of its disadvantages. Whatever excesses the other *hong* merchants permitted themselves, whatever their failures, his laborious integrity stood the test of half a century of seniority over the group. Time and again he would gladly have laid aside his labours with their incessant trials if the Government would have permitted him to, but one of its chief conditions was that once a *hong* merchant, always a *hong* merchant. There was no withdrawing from business. Only failure, disgrace, and banishment were the way out. His wealth and power grew day by day, and as the weight of his business increased, his face became more cadaverous, and his eyes more melancholy, albeit more wise, his manner more serious and resigned. But his reputation never altered. We see him moving in and out of every affair at Canton between Chinese officials and foreigners, shrewd, impersonal, serene.

Tradition records that he cracked but one joke in his life, and that a mild pun. When the British threatened to proceed to Peking and beard the invisible Emperor on his own ground, Houqua said blandly: "Suppose English man he go to Peking, Emperor go to Shan Si [sha'n't see]."

One of the most difficult of his gratuitous advantages of being the senior *hong* merchant was that of looking after the foreigners. He was responsible not only for the business dealings of the *co-hong* and of the individual foreigners, but in large measure for the personal and social activities of all concerned. The pranks and caprices of the white men were by him to be kept down. In matters of trade, the foreigners realized, of course, that they were safer in the hands of the *hongs* than in trying to deal with irresponsible merchants. But in personal affairs, they naturally chafed under the restraint which kept them virtually prisoners in their factories. Yet so wide did the Celestial Empire feel the gap between these opposing civilizations, that the Government was much more severe in these personal restrictions than it was even in the matter of trade. It raised an impassable bar to foreign intercourse with the Chinese.

One of the most annoying of these prohibitions was against bringing white women to Canton. Considering the liberties the Chinese permitted themselves in the matter of wives, there seems something peculiarly ironical and satanic in this interdiction. Men with wives were certain to be more sober than men without, but the Chinese knew that once they brought their wives along, the foreigners would not ever care to go, and they hoped by this denial to force them to leave. But they gave another reason. Tinqu, one of the *hong* merchants, explained that the Chinese would be too curious about white women, and in fact, whenever a white woman did smuggle herself in, Chinese paid "three cash" to satisfy their curiosity. Then, too, there was the difficulty of protecting the women against insult. Nevertheless, every now and then some defiant Briton would boldly assail the impregnability of this regulation; women would appear, dressed in men's clothes, and roam the streets of Canton. So long as possible, the officials would

"shutty eye and shutty ear," but in the end Houqua would have to remonstrate with the guilty foreigners, and the ladies would have to leave without a cure for their curiosity, or satisfaction to the men for their pains. This bar against white women was maintained until after the opium war in 1840.

It was not entirely without its advantages to the white men, as the case of the artist, Chinnery, so well illustrates. The tale has it that Chinnery had run away from his debts and his wife in Calcutta and went into hiding at Canton every time a ship touched port, lest he might get word of one or the other. His antics furnished conversation and jokes for a decade. Chinnery was very popular. Sitting on one or another of the balconies overlooking the Pearl River of an evening, his great shaggy head shrouded in cigar smoke, he would describe by the hour the sins of Mrs. Chinnery to a convulsed audience. The sins grew and magnified as the months rolled on and the lady herself did not appear, till they assumed mythical and heroic proportions and became symbolic of the harsh Occidental life which these men had left behind for the lax gaiety and splendour of the East.

For, with all their restrictions, the men enjoyed their exile blissfully enough, particularly the Americans, who were for the most part bachelors possessing no "she foreign devils" and found themselves less handicapped than the others when business brought them into the sacred presence of the Chinese at Canton. "I'm not surprised at your partiality for Canton," wrote William Sturgis, the Boston merchant, reminiscently to Cushing who lived the life of a recluse in the factories for twenty-five years. In sharp contrast to the splendour of the palaces of the Chinese mandarins was the huddling regularity of the foreign factories, seeking, as it were, with all their might, to keep from falling into the Pearl River. This humble exterior, however, belied the magnificence within. Bachelor apartments though they were, above the storage rooms, they were punctiliously managed by corps of Chinese servants, furnished, as Eastern homes still are, with some furniture from home, supplemented by thick Chinese rugs, carved ebony

tables and chairs, and great porcelain bowls, ivory screens, embroidered panels, and lacquer ware. There good whisky and champagne flowed freely as water—more freely, in fact, than good water—and when Frederick Tudor's ships began to bring out "blocks of Yankee coldness" there was even the miraculous sound of ice all day clinking in the glasses, and now and then among the papaws and mangoes and small tangerine oranges lay a red Baldwin apple.

Business was dispatched in sporadic whirls of activity, interspersed with long dinners in honour of everybody—captains, supercargoes, the *hong* merchants, and such "strangers of respectability" as happened to arrive in port. To lighten their exile, they did manage to slip in a little outing now and then. On New Year's Day they might be permitted to have a dinner party at Hwa To, a park called the "Flowery Land" just within the mouth of a branch of the Pearl River. Chinese would be on parade, in family parties, all arrayed in the richest silks of plum colour and jade, embroidered with birds and flowers, from neck to hem. The foreigners would arrive in gorgeous flower boats of their own, bringing food, wine, servants, and all the appurtenances of an elaborate dinner, even to the finger bowls.

In the quaint old Hall of the Dragon  
Whose columns, like sages of yore,  
Speak words of the haziest wisdom,  
To feed, chat, smoke, and to shore.

One understands why they snored when one reads the menu of such a dinner: "Birds'-nest soup; shad with hen's-egg sauce; mutton; fat capon with oyster sauce; curried oysters; 'fly gooso' (wild duck; tame duck being 'sit down gooso') chutney from Lucknow; oranges and dates (contributed as New Year's presents by the *hong* merchants); Cheshire cheese; ale; madeira wine; etc., etc."

But even in more quiet times the men did not suffer for want of pageantry in life. The Pearl River was a never-ending scene of entertainment. Stately mandarin boats with lanterns swinging and flags flying, flower boats, with all their filigree

carving, and a sound of music all day long floating back amidst the uproar, like unfinished melody made with tinkling glass accompanied by the occasional banging of tin pans; luxurious canal boats, from far inland cities, with varnished sides and spacious cabins, bringing down the tea that was to load some American brig; or great sea-going junks moving out among the canal boats, setting forth for Luzon and Java and the Malay Peninsula, as they had been doing from the very dawn of history.

Seeing which, the foreigners thought to exhibit their own aquatic skill and organized a regatta club of their own. But the ever-vigilant Houqua, prodded on by the officials, reprimanded them for their temerity as follows:

“On the river boats are mysteriously abundant; everywhere they congregate in vast numbers; like a stream they advance and retire unceasingly. Thus the chances of contact are many; so are accidents even to the breaking of one another’s boats, to the injury of men’s bodies, while more serious consequences might ensue!”

(Signed) “HOUQUA, MOUQUA, PWANKEIQUA.”

This was the official version. Unofficially, genial Houqua urged “More better no go.” But the foreigners would not be restrained, and difficulties did ensue.

It was all very well so far as the captains, supercargoes, and merchants went, for at the worst they made only an illicit journey into the jungles of Cantonese life. But the source of most of the trouble that kept Houqua and his *co-hong* on the go was the sailors who in drunken orgies would “clean up” the town. Trouble between them and the Chinese, though by no means excessive, was frequent. In 1821, the American ship *Emily* was in port. While she was at anchor some Chinese were gathered round her in their boats, and, it was alleged, a sailor on board of the name of Terranova dropped a jar upon the head of a woman, and she was seen to fall over into the river, from which she was removed dead. The mandarins immediately demanded

that Terranova be surrendered to them, and Houqua was sent on board to make the negotiations with the captain. He promised that Terranova would be returned after a fair trial; but instead, the mandarins put him through a form of inquiry in which it was never proved that he had even been seen to drop the jar, nor that he was actually guilty, and he was strangled in the Chinese fashion. Houqua's word had been utterly ignored by the officials. They had merely used him as a cats-paw to achieve their own ends. Such was the status of the *hong* merchants in the eyes of the officials.

Just a few years earlier the viceroy had had some difficulties with a foreign vessel and could obtain no satisfaction. To vent his spleen, he commanded Houqua to raise a fortress on the main branch of the river, ostensibly to prevent such complications in future. Houqua obeyed, and for some time there stood this fort, built of granite but injudiciously constructed and placed upon an insecure foundation. On another occasion, after trouble with the governor which resulted in the burning of a factory, the foreign merchant had, when rebuilding, put in a garden and a quay. The governor ordered these to be removed at once and threatened Houqua with pain of death if it were not done, and Houqua remained on his knees before the governor till the *hoppo*, the collector of customs, interceded on his behalf.

It was Houqua, always Houqua, who because of his wealth and his position as the senior merchant bore the brunt of all complications, even when wholly innocent. An affray had once occurred between a British crew and some Chinese in the course of which two Chinese lost their lives. The brother of one of the dead Chinese demanded a life for a life, but, afraid to accuse the governor of negligence of duty, he went all the way to Peking to report his case and there put the blame on Houqua. The authorities told him to go back to Canton, giving him an order to the governor to investigate. The governor, of course, found the accusations false. Now, according to Chinese law, a false accusation is punishable as only one degree less criminal than the commission of a crime. If the governor

had found Houqua guilty he would have been banished 3,000 *li*.<sup>1</sup> But having found him innocent, his accuser must, according to law, be banished one degree less, or 2,000 *li*. But inasmuch as the accuser had already made a long pilgrimage to Peking and back in the execution of so meritorious a mission, he was pardoned, and permitted to go free. Had there been a more complicated situation, there is no doubt but that the governor would have let Houqua pay the penalty for his prominence.

All of the *hong* merchants were bled in one way or another, but they accepted their tribulations with fatalistic indifference. They were constantly being haled before the mandarin court. Once when Fanqua, a lesser merchant, was being examined by a full court of mandarins with two secretaries taking notes, Mouqua, the dandy of the *co-hong* and second to Houqua, stood near him, laughing quietly up his sleeve, murmuring in English, which the mandarins could not understand, "Alle same sing song," which meant "Quite a farce."

## 4

Notwithstanding the difficulties that hampered the relations of the *hong* merchants with the foreigners, there existed an *entente cordiale* between them which bridged the artificial gap the mandarins sought to keep wide and impassable. The foreigners were frequently entertained very elaborately at the residence of this or that *hong* merchant, which afforded them a sight of splendour that no American, and very few Europeans, could expect at the time in their homelands. The houses occupied by a few of the more opulent in Canton were immense. Edmund Roberts, our first ambassador to the East, tells us in his "Embassy to the Eastern Courts," that they were "by no means inferior to the imperial palaces." Great gardens elaborately and curiously designed, with grottoes and lakes, crossed by carved stone bridges, and pathways that were inlaid with stones representing birds, fish, and flowers, afforded never-waning pleasure to the invited foreign guests. "The seat of the late Consequa, now half in ruins, was once superb; that of Houqua

<sup>1</sup>A *li* is the equivalent of  $\frac{2}{3}\frac{5}{8}$  of an English mile.

is on a scale of great magnificence; it is a village or rather palace, divided into suites of apartments, which are highly and tastefully decorated. Terraces are often built above the roofs, and when surrounded by a breastwork, afford in the cool of the day a very pleasant and secure retreat, to which the inmates can ascend, in order to breathe a pure air, enjoy a wider prospect, or to witness any event that transpires in the neighbourhood."

The Chinese domestic unit being the clan rather than the individual family, it was incumbent upon the wealthy Chinese to maintain establishments that were more in the nature of villages or groups of villas than houses. These usually covered several acres of ground and were surrounded by brick or stone walls twelve feet high and rested on granite foundations. The courtyards were paved with polished granite blocks and set with exotic plants and shrubs. There the foreigners would promenade with their masculine hosts, catching only occasional glimpses of the women, wives, and dependents of the merchants. There were always several wives. Tinquá had five, and classified them according to their looks and the manner of their coming into his possession. No. 1, he said, he didn't like. She had been chosen for him by his parents, and was "too much ugly." He preferred No. 2. As to the rest, they were mere incidents in a matrimonial existence. They shared in the general luxury of the proprietor, dressed in violet, scarlet, plum colour, or blue; and, even in the eyes of the foreigners, were frequently "quite handsome, with lustrous eyes and small feet of a natural size." To maintain such establishments proved a drain on some of the most opulent, and one *hong* merchant admitted that his family cost him \$200,000 a year for up-keep.

In the midst of such suave and luxurious life, manners and morals developed which could not but furnish the stuff romance is made of. While the *hong* merchants were compelled to be rigorous in the outward sense, personally they softened every possible rebuke with a kindness and a leniency not too usual in business. No official could possibly prevent a merchant from entertaining whomever he chose in his own home, even though as *hongs* they still had to maintain the regulation about foreign

women, or were compelled to banish an intractable foreigner to Macao. And on their part, the foreigners notwithstanding the occasional spree at some merchant's palace where they caught a fleeting glimpse of a beautiful Chinese lady, resented but did not regret the banishment. For their arts at entertaining themselves within their factories were taxed to the limit. To more than one sober son of the Puritans, life seemed godless enough, with Sundays devoted to poker, and dinner ending with drinking far into the night, with toasts for the bright eyes in Macao, and the conversation circling endlessly about some other man's wife, with whom it was quite proper for these exiled bachelors to appear to be eternally in love. This question of women was naturally a vital one, and men in this or that station at Canton or on the remotest islands asked about such-and-such man's luck with the reigning lady at Macao, and the success of the Chinese in trying to herd the white man out of Canton back to Macao was largely determined by the character of the current feminine population at that Portuguese settlement. And so between their factories at Canton and their residences at Macao all foreigners migrated, glad to escape the entanglements of domesticity or the strictures of the will of Heaven, with equal and alternate zeal.

In spite of all these irritating prohibitions there obtained, between the *hong* merchants and the foreigners, great friendships and generous dealing. One looks for imposition and deceit where the power is entirely in the hands of the native merchant, backed by an implacable government; but instead there remain records of generosity and gratitude, dramatic and delightful in the extreme. Some cases are almost incredible. There was, for instance, the case of the American trader (whom we shall call Williams) who thought to abscond from Canton without meeting a financial obligation. The young officer of the ship the American was sailing on persuaded him to satisfy his Chinese creditor. This got back to the *hong* merchant, who at once bought the officer's little stock which he was permitted to carry on the ship as part of his earnings at a more favourable price than any one else would have offered. Thereafter, for many

voyages, the merchant always bought the officer's cargoes at a better price. Some years later, the Chinese asked the American why he was not yet in command of a vessel of his own, and was told that the expense was more than he could bear, whereupon the *hong* merchant said he could easily remove that difficulty and gave him a draft for the requisite amount. It is said that he had even greater plans for rewarding the simple act of honour, but the young officer died at sea before he could carry them out.

Such friendships were numerous. A British merchant at Canton failed. Chinqua, the *hong* merchant with whom he had had considerable dealings, offered to lend him \$10,000 with which to begin again. The Englishman accepted and wrote out a note for the amount, which Chinqua at once threw into the fire, saying, with that casualness so typical of the Chinese: "When you, my friend, first came to China, I was poor, and you took me by the hand; and assisting my honest endeavour, made me rich. Our destiny is now reversed, and I see you poor, while I am blessed with affluence." Moved by this generosity, the merchant insisted on giving Chinqua some token, and offered his watch, whereupon Chinqua gave him an iron seal in turn; adding: "Take this seal. It is one I have long used, but possesses no intrinsic value. But as you are going to India to look after your concerns, should fortune further persecute you, draw upon me for any sum of money you may need, sign it with your own hand and seal it with this signet, and I will pay the money."

The *hong* merchants knew only too well how easy it was to rise and fall in business as it was then conducted, and developed their own standards of morality and integrity. They were rich and poor with equal ease. But one among them stood like a granite rock throughout his fifty years of hongship. Houqua maintained a remarkable hold upon the minds of the Americans by his invariable graciousness in all circumstances, and confidence in him was never shaken. In all his dealings with Russel & Company, and Perkins of Boston, written agreements were unknown. Mr. Russell Sturgis, of Baring Brothers, London, who had been for years in Canton, claimed that the

only document of any kind he ever had from Houqua was a slip of paper four inches long and three quarters of an inch wide, upon which was written laconically: "Forty thousand dollars, Houqua." Yet, when one of his compradores embezzled some \$50,000 of the account with Russel & Company, Houqua, who might easily have disclaimed the debt as there were no written records, at once sent the entire sum to his debtors. Houqua even went farther than meeting an intangible debt. An American friend of his was in financial straits and would have returned to America but for some notes for \$100,000 which he owed Houqua. As soon as he heard this Houqua went to him and said: "I hear you want to go back. I shall be sorry to lose you, but here are your notes cancelled, and I hope you will have good health and good luck in America."

One understands how the legend of Chinese honesty arose in the light of such generosity.

## 5

Generosity is easy where wealth comes easy, though the two do not very frequently go together. The *hong* merchants earned their money easily enough, and yet there was no enterprise hedged in by so much uncertainty, "squeeze," and duplicity as theirs. They had to be shrewd and grasping in order to offset some of the innumerable exactions that fell heavily upon them at every turn. It was no simple matter to become a *hong* merchant; and costly as it was to enter the *co-hong*, it was impossible to withdraw. If a vacancy occurred by death or failure, an applicant for the place usually had to pay about \$20,000 to the *hoppo*, the collector of customs; several thousands to writers, attendants, and staff to induce them to join him; several thousands more to the governor general as a means of securing his good will; a thousand or so each to magistrates to guarantee justice in case of legal action—altogether more than \$42,000 just for the privilege of undertaking business with the foreigners. Once in 1832, a new merchant, anticipating a great fortune in the business, named his *hong* "Happiness, or Prosperity Complete," but by the time he paid all the fees and bribes

he had nothing with which to carry on his business and went into bankruptcy. Such failures were numerous. In 1828-29, two *hongs* failed with more than two million dollars indebtedness, and just before the opium war, ten years later, one *hong* failed with a debt of \$5,000,000. To guard against such contingencies, the Government, as has been mentioned, established the Consoo fund, making all the *hongs* jointly responsible for individual failures.

But failure and bankruptcy were no escape for the unfortunate merchant. In such an eventuality the victim was banished to the most northerly section of the Empire, from which he seldom returned alive. To an embittered merchant, even banishment sometimes seemed better. Fatqua, anticipating bankruptcy because of a debt of more than 300,000 taels which he could not meet, stopped business. In order to save some of his fortune he asked that he and his six wives and eleven daughters be banished, hoping that in time he might be able to return. But the officials refused to banish him and compelled him to remain in the harness. He did. Gowqua's and Punjoyqua's *hongs* also closed for a while, but were compelled to resume business. Such circumstances were bound to bring odium down upon the name of many a merchant. When Mouqua died, though he had been a dandy in his day, dressed in different shades of blue, with a cap, blue in front, scarlet crown, and blue glass button on top, and was a favourite with the foreign ladies because he helped them to smuggle themselves into Canton, the papers recorded of him: "From all except his relatives and personal friends, there seems to be one universal expression of joy, that he is taken away." Still, with a government battenning upon them, with all trade illicit, and with much smuggling, the wonder is that there was as much honesty and fair dealing as is universally admitted.

It was the policy of the Government to "rule the barbarians by misrule," and the easiest way was by bleeding the *hongs*. The rule by misrule was carrying China headlong into collision with the foreign Powers, and all that was needed to precipitate conflict was a simple pretext. The British found it in opium.

With the exception of one or at most two American firms, all foreigners were engaged in smuggling opium. It seems to have troubled the puritanical conscience very little, so far as the American merchants went, whether they doped the Chinese with opium and appeased their gods with sandalwood or not. This inconsistency did not miss the notice of the Son of Heaven in Peking. "The foreign merchants, though they have been born and have grown up out of the pale of civilization, yet are all provided with innate consciousness of good," he admitted in an edict. But, he exclaimed, "What perversity can exceed this mad and absurd barking!" against the interdiction of opium smuggling that went up from the pious traders.

Unable to bear it any longer, Peking sent down to Canton Commissioner Lin, a conscientious gentleman who sincerely tried to stamp out the traffic. On March 23, 1839, of a Saturday morning, he and the Prefect of Canton proceeded at an early hour to the Consou House. Houqua and Mouqua were already there, stripped of their official buttons, and with small chains around their necks. Lin immediately dispatched them both to the house of Mr. Dent, a British merchant known to have engaged heavily in opium, with the command that said gentleman report at once to the Consou House. Unless he appeared, they were instructed to say, two of the *hong* merchants would be at once put to death. As an earnest of these intentions, the commissioner had already cast Gowqua and Houqua's son into prison.

When these two emissaries of "misrule" arrived at the foreign factories and announced their purpose, the foreigners held a prolonged conference and decided not to permit Mr. Dent to go to the Consou House, where they feared for his life. The Americans decided to yield, guaranteeing not to handle opium. Anti-British feeling was rising. To protect the American women who had secretly come in, Minqua, a *hong* merchant, sent closed chairs to the factory and had them carried to his own house. From Minqua's terrace they were able to look across to the factories, where presently smoke was seen to rise and flames burst from the British section. For a moment

the skylight of one of the houses and the chapel belfry glittered in the light—and then the whole sank in the flames. But Houqua's difficulties were not yet at an end.

"Chin chin my old and worthy friend Houqua for me," wrote Thomas Handasyd Perkins to his agent, R. B. Forbes, in Canton, on November 12, 1839. "I have frequently, in looking at his portrait, regretted the troubles and perplexities in which his duties have involved him. God bless you." In a letter to Forbes, Perkins had, of course, no need of adding that his own traffic in opium was partly responsible for Houqua's predicament, for Forbes himself afterward confessed to have made a fortune in the same way. Nor need one lose any tears over Houqua either, for that matter.

Previous to the outbreak of the war, and for six weeks from the time of Commissioner Lin's descent upon Canton, the foreigners had been kept prisoner within their warehouses until every ounce of opium in their possession was surrendered. All these helpless bachelors, living their gay and luxurious lives with innumerable servants in lieu of wives, were now virtually crippled by the withdrawal of all Chinese, of whatever station, in accordance with the order of Lin. The Parsees lent them their servants for certain tasks, but for six weeks they were compelled to play at housekeeping, and turned out eggs fried to the status of leather, if R. B. Forbes is to be relied upon. Mainly, however, it was their pride that was affected. The American consul, Mr. Snow, felt the insult to his office more than did the merchants to their wealth. "Is this not too bad, Mr. Forbes," he wailed, "that a public official at my time of life, not owning a pound of opium, should be imprisoned and compelled to do chambermaid's work?"

At last Captain Eliot surrendered some million dollars' worth of opium, withdrew from Canton, and the bombardment of the city followed. Then Canton was held for a six-million-dollar ransom. The Government turned in all directions for the wherewithal to pay. Of course, it turned first to the *hong* merchants, and made them pay a third of it. Inasmuch as Houqua was the senior and the most wealthy, more than half of

this third fell to his lot. But he was not going to pay without some gain. He decided that since pay he must, he might as well propitiate the gods at the same time, so he placed all the responsibility for his troubles on *Fung Shuy* (Wind and Water)—invisible agencies that must not be ignored. Accordingly he put down \$800,000 as a token of gratitude for his own prosperity; then he added \$200,000 for the filial piety of his oldest son; and then, \$100,000 for the youngest son, who was born to him in his sixtieth year. Adding just another touch of wisdom, he paid the whole fine in advance in order to avail himself of a discount of a thousand dollars by way of interest.

With the defeat of the Chinese came the extinction of the *co-hong* system. The Government was compelled to abolish this monopoly by treaty, but in the manner of ancient statecraft they afterward tried to exact another squeeze of \$5,000,000 which the merchants were of course unable and unwilling to pay. So they jointly paid off a debt of about a million due the foreigners individually, took down their lanterns from over their doors, and withdrew from business entirely.

Foreign aggression had won. But with their victory came their defeat, for with the loss of the *co-hongs* the foreigners lost most of the security which had until then been assured them. Risk of sales, fraud in packing, difficulty in collecting from irresponsible merchants began to offset such immediate advantages as they had gained by the treaty. A new morality, a new code, a new method had to be worked out.

## 6

Throughout the published and unpublished letters of American merchants and missionaries in China there is constant reference to "my dear friend Houqua." During the War of 1812, when American trade was interrupted, Houqua made several notes for thousands of dollars payable to Perkins of Boston (January 28, 1814, and November 16, 1814) while Perkins wrote to Houqua (April 25, 1815) advising him that the Port of Canton was closely blockaded and voyages were hazardous "during the destroying war which we have been subjected

to by the folly of our government." In another letter (November 16, 1814) Perkins advises Houqua of the state of specie in the country and declares that "New England is in a better position financially because it failed to lend money to the Government." This friendly confidential relationship existed between men who had never seen each other and were separated by twenty thousand miles of sea. It existed in the face of smuggling, "squeeze," and though protected neither by treaty nor the sentiment of the Chinese or American governments. It endured without a break during the twenty-five years that J. P. Cushing remained in business in China, and when he left on April 22, 1828, he wrote Houqua a warm personal letter of farewell.

After the opium war things were changed. Foreigners felt freer and missionary activities branched out. Dr. Peter Parker, the American missionary, returned from a visit home to open his hospital. He approached Houqua for the use of one of his unoccupied buildings. Houqua demurred at first. He was getting old, and did not wish to incur any further difficulties such as had occurred there before when a friendless beggar had died under Parker's care. The *Nanhai hien*, looking askance at the foreign practices, had held a coroner's inquest over the body and had of course put the blame indirectly on Houqua for permitting such magic on his premises. But now, when Doctor Parker assured Houqua that he would take due precautions against any such thing happening again, he mollified the patriarch. Having succeeded so far, Parker asked what rent Houqua would charge. Houqua replied that it would be unnecessary to speak of that.

"My own heart likes this business, too; if any repairs are necessary, just call my compradore, and he will see that they are attended to."

Doctor Parker then assured him that his generosity would be known in the West, where of course his reputation was well established. But Houqua gazed absent-mindedly before him. He was suffering from pruritus, and inquired of his physician how long he might expect to live. He was told encourag-

ingly that he was good for another ten years. He said three would be quite enough for him, just long enough to settle his affairs. He had twice before—many years ago—tried to buy himself off and retire, but in vain. Further oppression by the Government brought a sudden change for the worse, and this remarkable old man departed on a long journey to his ancestors, from Honan, on September 4, 1843, in the seventy-fourth year of his life. Despite the heavy drain upon his treasury, he had been reputed to have possessed, as far back as 1830 (when Stephen Girard of Philadelphia was worth \$7,000,000), \$26,000,000. Doubtless at the time of his death his fortune was much greater, and some said it had gone up into the fifty-million. Like Girard, he had spent more than fifty years at this incessant labour. Like Girard, he was a generous and yet solemn man. Richer by far than Croesus and as rich as John Jacob Astor, he made an interesting addition to the great merchants of the time. Here, then, lay the greatest heap of the Gold of Ophir.

With the passing of the *hong* system there went much of the charm and delight of the Far Eastern commerce. Other ports were opened and everybody rushed into the traffic. The clipper ships cut down much of the distance and the uncertainty, and the steamer did the rest. The taboo on women was removed. "Individual expenses greatly increased, houses and social arrangements became more luxurious, and with the great increase of society attendant upon the advent of ladies at all the ports, social entertainments became more general and most costly," says Forbes. What is more, the enchantment which the Chinese had always contrived to lend to themselves by maintaining their distance was gone.

And yet, contemporary accounts reveal an almost exaggerated admiration for the Chinese. People spoke of China as a kind of widespread, though secret, Utopia, perfectly managed from end to end. The *hong* merchants who had the unenviable task of interpreting the Chinese to the foreigners and the foreigners to the Chinese, of guarding them like children, left an impression of general goodness and justness. The wonder is that through

that long period of intercourse there should have been so little friction. There were not, according to H. B. Morse, more than a dozen cases of homicide during the hundred years of trade which could be regarded as bearing upon international relations. "The best commentary," he assures us, "on its commercial aspect is the admitted fact that there grew up side by side, during a century of joint working, a body of Chinese and foreign merchants, than whom there has never, at any time or at any place, been a more honourable, with many an occasion of help in time of difficulty, and with much sympathy and friendliness from one to the other."

The explanation for such amity is to be found in the character of the Chinese. We have mocked their pretence at superiority, we have laughed at the invisibility of the Son of Heaven. Yet the true test of worth lies in the ability of a people to accept temporary defeat. And there the individual Chinese gives proof of his mettle. It is hard for us to understand, but in them it is innate. Houqua propitiated the gods even as he was paying for the ransom of Canton. Minqua, after being given the fullest explanation of the old European custom of defending one's "honour" by duelling, was asked:

"And now do you understand?"

"Oh, yes, me savee all."

"Then, suppose you should insult a person and be called out. What would you do?"

"Maskee, he call um me, me no go."

"Unmanly" as this seems to us, according to our code, it nevertheless developed in the Chinese a knack at getting round a situation at which they are past masters. How graciously a Chinese can accept defeat. While the negotiations were going on between the High Commissioner Keying and Sir Henry Pottinger, after the opium war, a little one-act drama took place during the intervening "festivities," which shows how the Chinese can sink political animosity in personal friendliness.

Keying gave a banquet, and imbibed rather freely. Keying had no son, which to a Chinese is a tragedy, and when he learned that Sir Henry had, he offered to adopt him. Then, seeing a

miniature of Lady Pottinger, he asked for it. It being the only one he had with him, Sir Henry hesitated to give it away. The High Commissioner made a flattering offer for it, which Sir Henry declined. "What!" cried Keying. "Am I the governor general of the two Kiang and cannot get my order obeyed!" The little transaction was made, and the commissioner proceeded to sing a charming Tartar song. Then he took off a gold bracelet, made in the form of a puzzle with two hands clasped, and put it on Sir Henry's wrists. This he asked him to keep as a token of friendship, explaining that his father had given him two of these when he was a boy of eleven, and that he had worn this one for forty years, while his wife in Peking had the other. So did a Chinese, who was still in the act of settling an unprovoked and unjust war, accept his defeat.

And so does the legend of Chinese honesty and integrity hold our imaginations.

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BOOK TWO  
WESTWARD BY LAND



## CHAPTER XII

### GOD, NATURE, AND JEFFERSON

NOT even Jefferson, whom the irate New Englanders accused of having declared a dilapidated old church "good enough for One who was born in a manger," was content with anything less than a continent for a nation born on the beach. This aristocrat, with his contempt for commerce and mechanics, more than any other American, by virtue of his inconsistencies, gave to Vulcan a continent to roll his wheels upon. Yet there is not so much as a small state bearing his name.

History has a way of laughing pretenders off their thrones. The wise and the practical, roaring their platitudes against the idealists and the visionaries, hardly touch their first reality—Death—when their liberated sons cash in on the gleam which their fathers firmly denied. The belief prevails in this land that we developed and moved forward west, south, and north, because every heart thrilled to adventure and progress. Yet not an inch of soil was taken by the plough, not a lump of gold was washed in the waters of attainment but had previously been declared to be but barren and alloy. The story of this country is in part the story of denial and discouragement, of broken hearts and misplaced plaudits, and some of those whose vision saw the farthest have, because they were too far from the hour of achievement when the medals were being struck, gained nothing for their pilotage.

The slogans which, when the dullest could see the advantage, became our "Manifest Destiny" and "Fifty-four Forty or Fight" had for more than fifty-four years been, to the majority, neither manifest nor militantly necessary. America was to them a great enigma made up of petty confusions, and few conceived its geographical possibilities. Chateaubriand, in "Atala," gives us a picture of the New France as it was then

conceived: "Four great rivers, having their sources in the same mountains, divide these immense regions; the St. Louis, which loses itself in the East, in the gulf of its own name; the river of the West, which empties itself in the unknown seas; the river Bourbon, which runs from South to North and falls into Hudson's Bay; the Meschaceba [Mississippi] which runs from North to South, and empties into the Gulf of Mexico." Narrow and circumscribed as the knowledge of the earth's surface still was, tremulous Europeans, the progenitors of the Americans, had a grand way of claiming territories with a sweep of the hand, dividing the world according to their appetites rather than to their digestions. But once they obtained possession through exploration by sea, their dreaming seemed to come to an end and the things possessed lost flavour. Thus France, Spain, and England were content to frustrate each other's schemes of empire by their conflicting claims in America, leaving settlement to adventurers and schemers. France might burst with speculation over projects for the development of the Mississippi. England might imitate her in the South Sea Bubble, Spain might gorge herself in Mexico, but as to going out there and actually struggling with the elements—they were all too gentlemanly for that.

We commonly hear that Great Britain lost "an American empire," but as a matter of fact she lost merely a strip along the Atlantic seaboard. Had the colonies not broken away, it is certain that Great Britain would never have obtained even half of that empire. "France," said Chateaubriand, "formerly possessed in North America a vast empire, which extended from Labrador to the Floridas and from the shores of the Atlantic to the remotest lakes of Upper Canada." What remained beyond reverted to Spain, contested by Russia in the north Pacific. Had there been no growing republic on the scene, England would have been compelled to remain content with the fraction that was hers.

But all the Powers had calculated without their offspring in America who were faced with the realities at their doors. The masses were pressing inward inch by inch, seldom seeing beyond

the next state, seldom speculating on anything but a better piece of land to hoe. The vast majority were too closely bound to the soil to dream of empire. Hamlin Garland, in "A Son of the Middle Border," pictures these slow migrations when men picked up their families and moved on, and then, after a pause, began the pursuit once again.

But from the time the colonies found themselves free from England, there were a few to whom the thought of having the whole continent, from coast to coast, under one management, as it were, became ferment in their minds. To them it seemed inevitable that at some future day there should exist upon the Pacific a great port from which the luxuries of the Indies should make their way over the mountains and bring something more than bread into the lives of those in the wide-spreading interior. Foremost among these was Thomas Jefferson, who had received his first inspiration from the Alastor of the American forests, John Ledyard. And in the decades to come there followed a succession of visionaries, each with his eyes upon the Orient, on the wealth of China, who saw as clearly as daylight that America's future lay upon the Pacific.

Before anything like that could happen, however, it was necessary to consolidate such lands and forces as already lay within the domains of the Government. Westward expansion was indeed synonymous with independence, as all the political pronouncements of the next century indicate. But westward expansion was fraught with grave dangers. Washington saw only too clearly that a too hasty development of the continent would make for disintegration. Thus two well-marked tendencies are found in our national development, with appropriate checks and counterchecks to maintain the Union. One was to prevent alien interference in American affairs; the other was to permit of growth westward only by a process of absorption.

In that most dignified and wistful valedictory—his Farewell Address—Washington exhorts the ex-colonies to work for unity and the common good. A great deal has been heard about his cautioning us against entangling alliances, but this has been misunderstood. What Washington was afraid of was alli-

ances made by separate states with foreign Powers. He saw with apprehension the jealous "watchful waiting" of the European monarchies. England was encouraging division by permitting trade with her freely only when cargoes were brought to England in bottoms belonging to the state whence the goods originated. Cotton from the South could not be transported, for example, by ships from New England. France was sowing dissension through her Genêts, etc. etc. This division of interests encouraged from abroad stimulated sectional differences and aspirations within. The evils to be feared were party politics, petty passions, provincial and sectional tendencies. When the Mississippi troubles arose, there were loud threats of secession unless New Orleans were opened to the Western states along the great river.

When, therefore, Washington felt that he was laying down the reins of government for ever, he condemned these separatist leanings within the republic lest they rend it asunder. "Any other tenure by which the West can hold this essential advantage whether derived from its own separate strength *or from an apostate and unnatural connection with any foreign power*, must be intrinsically precarious." This thought runs through the whole of the address. He was not afraid of the United States as a whole forming any alliance it thought fit, so much as of any single state making such "an apostate and unnatural connection."

Copies of the address had hardly been distributed throughout the country when the New Orleans trouble burst into flame. Not long afterward Clinton declared in Congress, "It has struck me with not a little astonishment that on the agitation of almost every great political question we should be menaced with this evil"—secession.

International strife was more to be desired than inner dissension. The maritime states were loath to be held tied to the plodding agriculturalists of the South and West. Washington had noticed these secession bubbles in the Southwest, while "the Western states hang upon a pivot. The touch of a feather would turn them any way," he declared. Though he does not

mention the Pacific, he had nevertheless sensed the westward trend, not unmindful of the seafaring enterprises of New England that had brought the Northwest coast into our horizon. The North, he pointed out, "finds its particular navigation invigorating, and contributes in different ways to nourish and increase the general mass of national navigation," and the East "will more and more find a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad"—then largely the China trade. Washington was speaking as a father to his sons who are tugging away at the estate and threatening to break up the family.

The concomitant of no alliances was naturally no interference. The ire at France and Spain in the South was identical with that toward England and Russia half a century later over Oregon. Then, as we shall soon see, too sudden westward expansion was feared lest in it lie disunion rather than growth. But before such a doctrine as that of Monroe could become necessary, the development of the whole continent must perforce continue apace. Without an objective, that development could not but lag or be wholly retarded. That object from the very beginning was China. The China trade had brought the merchant shipowners of the East into the West by way of the Horn and was destined to exert an even more direct influence upon the westward drive that finally hurdled the Rockies.

## 2

To Washington's plea for a perfect union Jefferson had made a most important addition. Jefferson saw that there could be no solid union without a solid continent behind it. He did not believe in too much government, but he did believe in the spreading of common ideals so far and so wide that they would in themselves, even through political disunion, hold together. Early convinced that Ledyard was right in regard to the opening of the West, Jefferson had lived to see that dream converted into a fact by Captain Gray of the *Columbia*. When at last Jefferson became President, his first interest was in sending an expedition that would explore the country, even as he had urged Ledyard to do so when he was Minister to France.

“To a statesman like Thomas Jefferson,” says one of his biographers, “it was evident that a large portion of that immense territory, separated from the United States by no barrier of nature, would be eventually embraced within their boundaries. He was convinced, therefore, of the propriety of its being explored by a citizen of the United States, and regretted the failure of Ledyard’s attempts in his own country to engage in a voyage before the same thing had been meditated anywhere else. These views were deeply impressed on the mind of Jefferson, and in them originated the journey of Lewis and Clark twenty years afterward, which was projected by him and prosecuted under his auspices.”

Until 1803, such an expedition was doubtful of success, but Jefferson planned to accomplish it indirectly. Long before he even dreamed of purchasing Louisiana from France, he was preparing to send Merriwether Lewis to determine the resources and outlets of the lands in front of and beyond the Rockies. The expedition was actually under way, with the consent and support of Congress, though it was to pass through territory not belonging to the United States. Some secrecy had to be maintained. Jefferson wrote to Lewis: “The idea that you are going to explore the Mississippi has been generally given out. It satisfies the public curiosity and masks sufficiently the real destination.”

But suddenly, the juggling of the schemes of empires had shifted the Mississippi region from the hands of Spain to those of France. For all his love of France, Jefferson realized that having only just fought off England, and being in the briars with her yet on the question of impressment and the freedom of the seas, it was bad enough to have dissolute Spain at the rear, but infinitely worse, imperious France. The precipitate blocking of New Orleans by France, which was bound to follow, would frustrate every possibility of this country’s natural development toward the Pacific. Monroe had written on January 13, 1803:

“On the event of this Mississippi River depend the future destinies of this Republic. If we cannot, by a purchase of the

country, ensure to ourselves a course of perpetual peace and friendship with all nations, then, as war cannot be far distant, it behooves us immediately to be preparing for that course, without, however, hastening it."

It was at that moment, perhaps, that the doctrine of Manifest Destiny first found expression. Two months before Monroe and Livingston bought the whole of Louisiana from Napoleon (February, 1803) Jackson, speaking on the Mississippi Question in Congress, expressed the conviction that New Orleans must eventually belong to the United States. "God and Nature," predicted Jackson, "have destined New Orleans and the Floridas to belong to this great and rising empire . . . and the world . . . cannot hold them from us." God, Nature, and Jefferson, he should have said.

It is inconceivable that Napoleon would have given away this vast territory if he had not thought that by so doing he would weaken England where she could stand it least. France had lost India to Great Britain, but America was rapidly becoming England's most serious rival in the Oriental trade. Feeling that he had made a poor bargain even at \$15,000,000, Napoleon sought to justify himself in the eyes of the world, and is reported by Marbois to have said:

"This accession of territory strengthens for ever the power of the United States, and I have just given England a *maritime rival* that will sooner or later humble her pride."

How could Louisiana produce a maritime rival to England? Every statement by almost every man who had anything to do with the exploration of the region after the purchase points to the potent factor it would become in the prosecution of the China and East India trade.

With Louisiana safely in American control, the scheme for its exploration under Lewis and Clark need no longer remain masked. Now Jefferson could say he was merely taking inventory of the new possessions. The destination could now be openly declared, and Congress, in appropriating \$2,500 for the

expenses of the expedition, put it down "for the purpose of extending the external commerce of the United States." From now on the objective is frankly stated. Jefferson's instructions to Lewis show that his mind was set on the Pacific and the trans-Pacific trade. They were "to explore the Missouri River and such principal streams of it as, by its course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, whether the Columbia, Oregon, Colorado, or some other river, may offer the most practical and direct water communication *across the continent for the purpose of commerce.*" His object was so to open the country that trade might thereafter be "conducted through the Missouri and United States more beneficially [than] by the *circumnavigation now practiced.*" The circumnavigation he refers to is of course that round the Horn for furs to the Northwest coast and China. But he is even more definite. He suggests that they discover "the practicability of taking the furs of the Rocky Mountains direct to China, upon the line of the Columbia River and the Pacific Ocean."

Now, the reason for Jefferson's eagerness to open the country all the way to the Pacific becomes more explicit when we consider the state of affairs at the time on the Atlantic. If an overland route were established, then might America be free from the complications which trans-Atlantic seafaring was subject to. The impressment difficulties were at their height. England was imposing new restrictions upon the trade which was giving the United States an annual revenue of \$1,300,000. While Britain was adamant in the matter of the West India trade, she doled out the East India commerce with irritating restrictions.

"Are you not contented with being free and happy at home?" asked John Randolph in Congress. "Or will you surrender these blessings that your merchants may tread on Turkish and Persian carpets, and burn the perfumes of the East in their vaulted rooms? . . . Do you meditate war . . . for the fair trade that exchanges your surplus products for such foreign articles as you require? No, sir, it is for a circuitous trade—an ignis fatuus." This was the same John Randolph who not many years before during a sojourn in Providence, where

he understood but ill the local dialect and enjoyed much less the local diet of ham and eggs, had exclaimed, when told that the tide was too high for clams, but there would be served some capital quahogs: "Good God! More bacon!"

The curtailments on the Atlantic were an ever-increasing source of discontent. Mr. Findlay, as though retorting to Randolph, explained that "though these aggressions have hitherto been principally committed on cargoes of Colonial produce, where only we can find a market for the produce of the Middle and Eastern states; yet the principles are equally applicable to much of our East India trade, and to the trade of France, Spain, and Holland, from which we derive most of the favourable balance of trade, which enables us to discharge the unfavourable balance of trade with Great Britain."

In these circumstances, it would seem that the whole country would have seen at a glance the excellent advantage to be gained by an overland route free from all possible interdictions which would be opened by the purchase of Louisiana. But poor Jefferson, with all his keen foresight, tremblingly sought the consent of Congress to the acquisition, nor did he succeed without meeting considerable opposition. To most it was a white elephant that would never yield a fraction of return on the investment. The moderate maintained that though it may not be an Elysian region like Homer's Fortunate Islands, it was nevertheless fertile and salubrious. "Geography points us to China, Persia, India, Arabia Felix, and Japan," said Elliot in Congress, "countries situated in corresponding latitudes, which, though always overshadowed by the horrid gloom of despotism, are always productive and teach us by analogy that Louisiana, in natural fertility, is probably equal to those beautiful Oriental regions." Thus, the idea that in Louisiana the United States had acquired a new Eden was balanced by the declarations of the lugubrious that it was a dreary and barren wilderness. To the seeing ones it seemed as though America had found an Orient at home.

To Jefferson, Louisiana was an escape from the thralldom that hung over the Atlantic. And when Lewis and Clark set

their faces toward the west, they were, in their own words, conscious of the magnitude of their undertaking and the immensity of the possibilities they were about to open to posterity. Lewis had definitely in mind the trade that in Jefferson's eyes justified the expedition. Their sensations, when on November 7, 1805, like Balboa three centuries before, they stood and gazed for the first time on the Pacific, may be best told by Clark, though but half expressed in clear English. They had come "in view of the Ocian, this great Pacific Octean which we have been so long anxious to See. and the roeing or noise made by the waves brakeing on the rockey Shores (as I suppose) may be heard distinctly."

And so the dream of John Ledyard became a prosaic fact. Few dared hope too much from their appraisalment. None grasped its full significance. That there would some day flourish a land greater than the whole of Europe would have seemed preposterous. Even Thomas Jefferson felt that there would develop several nations, rather than one, from coast to coast. In 1812, he wrote to Astor approving of his Astoria project:

"I considered as a great public acquisition the commencement of a settlement on that point of the Western coast of America, and looked forward with great gratification to the time when its descendants should have spread themselves through the whole length of that coast covering it with free, independent Americans, unconnected with us except by the ties of blood and interest and enjoying like us the rights of self-government."

Instead of Washington's more perfect Union, Jefferson's ideals tended toward some form of coöperative imperialism.

To Jefferson's opinions Secretary Gallatin assented. In a letter on the Oregon Question, he said:

"The inhabitants of the country, from whatever quarter they may have come, will be, of right, as well as in fact, the sole legitimate owners of Oregon. Whenever sufficiently numerous they will decide whether it suits them best to be an

independent nation, or an integral part of our great Republic. . . . Viewed as an abstract proposition, Mr. Jefferson's opinion appears correct, that it will be best for both the Atlantic and the Pacific American nations, whilst entertaining the most friendly relations, to remain independent rather than to be united under the same government."

In the true sense of the word, then, the purchase of Louisiana was not prompted by aggrandizement or imperialism. It was a form of land hunger, but not that of the conqueror. Russia's seeking for an outlet on the Bosphorus or on the Pacific is more analogous and as justifiable. But why should this "hunger" for land have existed in a country scarcely able to utilize the area allotted to it? The use of the term "expansion" only confuses the problem. There was land speculation enough and it brought such eminent men as Robert Morris to their ruin and drove people like the parents of Hamlin Garland ever westward. But that accounts for this early movement only in part. Nor do the love of adventure and the aggressiveness of the missionary fully illumine it. The one thing that gives it its *raison d'être* is the China trade and the outlet on the Pacific for it. That was an objective. If there is obstruction in the Atlantic, if the old nations will frustrate our efforts, we will turn our backs on them, and with an opening on the Pacific, find egress for our continental energies through a region so far from Occidental turmoil as to be free from all entanglements. So we have achieved the isolation China always craved and our friendliness with that great people has been part compensation for our early difficulties with European snobbery.

One man there was who, despising those entanglements most, also did more than all others to realize this achievement. That man was Thomas Jefferson. "That great man," said Thomas Hart Benton, "always intent upon benefiting the human race, had conceived the grand idea of a commercial intercourse with India upon this line of communication. . . . And thus Mr. Jefferson was the first to propose the North American road to India."

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## CHAPTER XIII

### THERE LIES THE ROAD TO INDIA

**D**URING the years that intervened between Jefferson's expedition to the Columbia and the time of the admission of Missouri into the Union, the growth of the states westward had fully established the greater need for an outlet on the Pacific. The struggle over the slavery question not only delayed the creation of new states, but because of it encouragement for further expansion was withheld. The allotment of three states to the South and seven to the North created a frantic effort which materialized in the purchase of Florida and the treaty with Spain in 1819. Thus was the development of the country northward through to Oregon checked and split, giving the impetus to the thrust to California by way of Texas. What then became loudly known as our "manifest destiny" was in the last analysis only a struggle over slavery aggravated by the fears of too hasty Western development that might result in either a secession or in the projection of an independent republic on the Northwest Pacific. By 1820, Jefferson, who had even advocated the rearing of national offspring on that coast, trembled at the prospects looming up in Missouri and beyond. "I considered it at once the knell of the Union," he said.

But a new development on the Pacific came to counteract the growing tendency toward disunion. The Russian-American Fur Company was active again, and had been instrumental in obtaining a magniloquent ukase proscribing the use of the Pacific to any peoples, not excluding the United States and Great Britain. In a trice the eyes of America were once more focussed upon the Pacific and the Orient. Once more a sense of the unity of the continent took hold of the imaginations of men. On March 30, 1822, Secretary of State J. Q. Adams de-

clared to the Russian minister: "From the period of the existence of the United States as an independent nation, their vessels have freely navigated those seas, and the right to navigate them is a part of that independence." Latent within that pronouncement was the note of the "manifest destiny." The nation that but twenty years before was trying merely to buy a small roosting place on the Mississippi was already openly challenging the mightiest empire for its natural rights on an ocean upon which it had not even a cove to which it might rush for shelter from the storms or drive a peg into a stove-in hulk. The very next year, it was not merely a right to navigate those seas: it was a challenge to Russia not to set foot upon American soil below Alaska. Again, not on the grounds of actual possession. But, says Adams, "I told him [the Russian minister] that we should contest the right of Russia to *any* territorial establishment on this continent, and that we are no longer subjects for *any* European colonial establishments."

Jefferson, still mistrusting Great Britain, again chose the lesser prospect of evil—alliance with her. But Adams, now more keen than the elder statesman, saw that in the event of failure to make Russia withdraw the ukase he would have England in Oregon, France in Mexico, and Russia in California and Alaska, and determined to stand his own ground. The Monroe Doctrine, so-called, while aiming to prevent the dismemberment of South America by the Holy Alliance, was first and foremost the last thrust in the direction of the Pacific (and the China trade). And the same period that saw the end of foreign settlement in America saw the beginning of the last drive overland to the Pacific, as we shall now see. It was obvious that Spain was crumbling from within. Force the allies to wait, and the Southern section of North America would fall into our basket.

Thus was the consummation of the doctrine of American independence of all European control made at the very point where the nation had made its first diplomatic achievement. For it will be remembered that it was for fear lest America accept Jefferson's suggestion and form an alliance with Spain and

France against England over the Nootka Sound controversy in 1790 that England deemed it wiser to dispatch some representative to America, a move she had long refrained from making.

## 2

The practical men of the world are for ever chiding the dreamers for keeping too strained an eye on the horizon. Yet what would they? To the blind the sense of touch suffices, but God had other concerns than merely to duplicate wonders when He created eyes. And in the progress across the country the same ordination made of each promontory a perch from which to scan the beyond. The opening of Louisiana was merely proof of the need of Oregon.

A full round century before, when John Law dreamed of the settlement of the Mississippi, vessels had been armed, troops had embarked, prostitutes and vagabonds had been collected in order to dispatch them to these solitudes with a capitalized backing of a hundred million francs. But it was an altogether different project that raised its talons with the admission of Missouri into the Union.

At "Brown's Hotel" in Washington there resided two gentlemen who represented the interests of John Jacob Astor, interests that by 1821 amounted to some thirty million dollars. These gentlemen, Ramsay Crooks and Russell Farnham, had made the acquaintance of Dr. John Floyd. There shortly joined the group another gentleman, the incoming Senator from the new state of Missouri, Thomas Hart Benton.

Historians, in tracing the development of a nation, are apt to pick out the decisive achievements that rise most prominently into the political consciousness and prove a predestined drive behind them. But nations, like the individuals of which they are composed, proceed haltingly, uncertain, eager, through moments of fear and passion, in all directions at once, inconsistent and yet bound by the ties of immediate necessity. Certainly the period under discussion elucidates this more than all others. Missouri had just been admitted after bitter years

of wrangling. If every subsequent "child" was to be born under such dangerous circumstances, the "mother" might well have determined not to risk her life for future offspring. Yet before Missouri's first senator was admitted to his seat, he was already plotting for the extension of our domain. Those who at that time held the position of preëminence called it unjust "expansion"; those who had a guilty conscience dubbed it "manifest destiny"; but eliminating both piety and pride, we discover sheer necessity simply obeying the laws of nature unmindful of slogans. Missouri, the first state west of the Mississippi, was faced with the alternative of running the gauntlet of Eastern speculation and monopoly, or of turning in the direction of the Pacific where an outlet awaited her, free, except for primitive assumption and imperial conceit, from restrictions. For years Missouri had been the concourse of the trapper and the hunter. For years it had watched the furs from that dark interior take their course across the Pacific seas to China and fatten the larders of New Englanders who looked upon these Far Western pioneers as only more boorish savages. When at last the New West found its voice in national affairs, it is little to be wondered at that its birth cry was a lusty demand for a sea of its own. Most writers on our westward "expansion" attribute the wave of migration to restlessness, the proselytizing zeal, or sheer love of adventure. While without these traits only the most visible goal would have lured men, nevertheless, without a goal, their restlessness would have found satisfaction in less terrible play than that of the 'forties.

There were several counteracting tendencies. The Eastern States were indifferent to the West except for their anxiety to remain in the position of "mouth" or "delta" to that great river of wealth which all expected to pour down from the Rockies and over the plains. They could not look but with disfavour upon any project that might break open a sluice in the mountains and turn the stream toward the Pacific. Nevertheless, they had for decades been in close contact with the Pacific coast, the maritime circumstances suited their taste

and inclination, and their priority itself would stand them in good stead should the inevitable development occur.

But the New West had no such alternatives. The struggle over slavery had begun. Yet, those who took up the cry of "On to the Pacific and Oregon!" unlike the clamourers for Texas and California, were, by so much, blocking the progress of slavery. Strangely enough, the two who led the fight for Oregon—Floyd and Benton—and most of their supporters were from slave states, and Benton himself was a slaveholder. If slavery had been uppermost in their minds, they would have diverted attention from Oregon along with the Jackson-Tyler hosts. But they saw opportunities more luring than involuntary servitude would ever net, and with the persistence of dreamers and visionaries they became the advocates of "On to Oregon!"

Doctor Floyd, who had been governor of Virginia, had entered Congress in 1817 but seems never to have forgotten that a cousin of his, Charles Floyd, had been one of the company of Lewis and Clark. John Quincy Adams alleged that a greater and nearer concern interested Floyd in the opening of Oregon to settlement: that his brother-in-law had absconded after having embezzled some of the finances of the state when he was its Treasurer, and settled on the coast. But in those days, as now, office seeking was not always for altruistic motives; so we shall dismiss this for what it is worth as political mudslinging. But certain it is that Floyd's prolonged and unflinching devotion to the opening of the Northwest must have had deep roots, else it would hardly have endured against the more immediate interests of his state in the matter of slavery. For, as his colleague and his peer in this cause said, Floyd "took up this subject which seemed more likely to bring ridicule than credit to its advocate."

It is doubtful if Floyd would have undertaken this project alone, even with the stimulus Astor's agents could give. It is quite likely that the year before he moved that the House investigate the Oregon claims, he had read an essay written and published at St. Louis on the Oregon-Asiatic Commerce.

Doubtless he also knew the author himself, and was elated with the prospect of his coming to Washington in his capacity as senator from the new state of Missouri. And so, when Senator Thomas Hart Benton arrived, pending the actual admission of his state into the Union, and found himself with little to do for the greater part of the year when admission hung fire, he spent much of his time in the company of Floyd and the agents discussing the Oregon question. The House moved, a committee was formed, and Doctor Floyd became its chairman, and on January 25, 1821, the Committee reported that "they have carefully examined the subject referred to them, and from every consideration which they have been able to bestow upon it, believe, from the usage of all nations, previous and subsequent to the discovery of America, the title of the United States to a very large portion of the coast of the Pacific Ocean to be well founded."

In the debates that followed the introduction of this bill, Floyd went fully into the importance of the Canton trade, the whaling, the tremendous possibilities in Oregon for fish, particularly salmon, timber, vegetables, the easy communication with the Indies—such information as he had from Astor's men and from Benton. He pictured the existing conditions on the coast which for years had been the theatre of a vast enterprise in furs and whales and seals, and prophesied a great increase in trade with the Orient through that channel. This he declared, "seems to demand immediate attention." He gave a deplorable account of the obstructions Americans had met with from the British, and showed how the Canadians had reaped enormous advantages. "Their exports from Quebec alone are valued at more than a million annually." A great deal more furs were taken into the United States and shipped by way of New York and Philadelphia direct to China or India, and some of them found their way thither on East India Company ships. Some made the journey round the Horn to Boston and were immediately reshipped "for the benefit of drawback." He distinguished between ordinary commerce, in which we send our goods abroad for things needed, and this in which none of our

produce is dispatched. A cargo of half or three quarters of a million in cotton and tobacco sent to Europe is still the original cargo, but in the fur trade and the fisheries not only is little capital necessary, or none at all, but to obtain a cargo is like finding pure gold. A vessel "would return with that in exchange which would sell for perhaps double the amount, thereby contributing to the comfort, enjoyment, and accommodation of the community \$740,000, which is the result not of a profitable voyage, but a creative trade."

All of which was merely by the way of justifying the occupation of Oregon itself for its own sake. "Would it not be better," Floyd pleaded, "that our children occupy so large and beautiful a country. A country abounding in productions better in the rich markets of India and China than silver and gold, cannot be left untenanted. . . . I shall, Mr. Chairman, close the few remarks I have to make, by an appeal to the House, to consider well our interests in the Western Ocean, on our Western Coast, and the trade to China and to India; and the ease with which it can be brought down the Missouri. What is this commerce? Has it not enriched the world? Thousands of years have passed by, and, year after year, all the nations of the earth have, each year, sought the rich commerce of that country; all have enjoyed the riches of the East. This trade was sought by King Solomon by Tyre, Sidon; this wealth found its way to Egypt, and, at last, to Rome, to France, Portugal, Spain, Holland, England, and, finally, to this Republic. How vast and incomprehensibly rich must be that country and commerce, which has never ceased, one day, from the highest point of Jewish splendour, to the instant I am speaking, to supply the whole globe with all the busy imagination of man can desire, for his ease, comfort, or enjoyment! Whilst we have so fair an opportunity offered, to participate so largely in all this wealth and enjoyment, if not to govern and direct the whole, can it be possible that doubts, on mere points of speculation, will weigh with the House and cause us to lose for ever the brightest prospect ever presented to

the eyes of a nation? . . . England wants nothing now to give her the entire control of all the commerce of the world, for ages to come, but a position on our Western Coast, which she will soon have, unless you pass this bill."

The House was impressed, though not without some snickers. Mr. Trimble of Kentucky thanked Floyd heartily as politicians are wont to do, not only in his own name, and in the name of the people he represented, but, "he believed, of a great portion of the American people." In that he was more correct than are historians of the subject. He repeated some of the representations of Floyd, the advantage of the trade, of control over an ocean that "is the richest sea in the world, and is as yet without a master," and while he could not take issue with or enlarge upon these prospects, he did feel that the thing to do right now was to "give your people the bounty land, and let them go and make a settlement and form a nucleus around which other emigrators may collect, and time will gradually consolidate them into a powerful community." As to the future, "posterity will know how to take care of itself."

Mr. McDuffie of South Carolina, with the wisdom of the practical man, thundered: "I would not give a pinch of snuff for the whole territory. I wish to God we did not own it. . . . If I had a son whose conduct made him a fit subject for Botany Bay I would say, in the name of God, go there. This is my estimate of the importance of the Settlement."

Nevertheless, the House passed the bill "to provide for occupying the Columbia and Oregon River" (later omitting "Columbia") by a vote of 113 to 57, on Thursday, December 23, 1824. Three years of annual agitation was required, but the majority showed that Trimble was right about the feeling of the American people.

When the report of the Committee reached the hands of Monroe, he turned it over to John Quincy Adams for his recommendations. Adams, who was somewhat sour on the China problems, and who later, during the opium war, turned so bitterly pro-British in the quarrel, now scorned the work of Floyd, whom he accused of malversation, and declared that

the report "was a tissue of errors in fact and abortive reasoning." All he could suggest was that it be given to the fire.

But if Adams thought he was through with the issue in that way, he had counted without Benton. He might accuse Floyd of feathering his own nest, but none had the slightest grounds for suspecting the intrepid Benton. Had not Benton turned down every land-dealing client in his state the moment he was elected to office? Was not Benton himself a slaveholder, and hence could not be accused of a bias in connection with his advocacy of Northwest settlement? Benton, though born in North Carolina, was not, as Roosevelt remarks, a Southerner, but a Western statesman, the first of his breed. The "new West" was in the same position with regard to the Eastern states that the colonies had been with regard to England before rebellion. "When our ancestors embarked on the sea of independence," says John Bassett Moore, "they were hemmed in by a system of monopolies.<sup>1</sup> It was to the effects of this system that the American revolt against British authority was primarily due; and of the monopolies under which they chafed, the most galling was the commercial." The new West was not merely an offshoot of the old, but it was a new "nation," with distinct interests and separatist tendencies. It had to break through the Eastern monopolies just as the East had to break those of Europe. The East had turned to the Indies; so the new West was seeking an outlet of its own across the Rockies. And the most alert Westerner of the time was certainly Benton. He had roamed the plains with his men as a youth. He had been fired by the prospects of the Northwest. But (and we have this on the authority of his daughter) he had drunk in the stories of the Indies in his childhood. "In the early home readings my father had studied the trial of Warren Hastings, and Clive and India were almost as close to his boyhood as our war is to the boys of to-day. The struggle for India and its trade 'greater than that of Tyre and Sidon' made the story of a great war on a background of Oriental splendour." And, as we have seen, he had gone with Jefferson in imagina-

<sup>1</sup>Chief among them the East India Company.

tion to the ends of the continent. And now he was in a place in Congress where his voice might speak on behalf of—not expansion, as Roosevelt erroneously claims—but of the rights of the new West. What most Easterners fail to realize is that the West could not remain as smugly content as the East. The impulse of the West was not merely land hunger; no more manifest destiny than one can say the child's right to six feet of height is manifest destiny. The West could not just become the tail of the East. It wanted a mouth of its own, and that mouth was the Columbia River.

From the day Benton took his place in Congress, which was in 1821, to the signing of the Treaty with England over Oregon in 1846—a round quarter century—Benton never lost sight of that gleam. “Within one year after the occupation of the Columbia,” prophesied Benton, “the rich productions of the East Indies would flow into the valley of the Mississippi, upon this new and truly national route.” It is interesting to speculate on how accurate would have been his prediction had not the gold rush of California suddenly swerved all human interests from Oregon to the country to the south. But that he was not a bad prophet is evident from a speech he made in the Senate in 1820.

“Within a century from this day, a population, greater than that of the present United States, will exist on the west side of the Rocky Mountains. I do not deal in paradoxes, but in propositions as easily demonstrated as the problems in Euclid. Here, then, is the demonstration: Dividing our portion of this continent into five equal parts, and there will be found, in the valley of the Mississippi, three parts; on the east side of the Alleghany Mountains one part, on the west of the Rocky Mountains, one part.” And then he proceeds to show that by 1920 there would be a hundred and sixty million people in the United States, “of which a hundred millions will drink the waters which flow into the Mississippi, and sixty millions will be found upon the lateral streams which flow, east and west, toward the rising and the setting sun.” Evidently, Benton was impressed with the discussion of population set afoot by

Malthus which had just been debated in print by William Godwin. But what are thirty or forty millions more or less to us in these days, and we are reaching the 120,000,000 to-day.

At this point Benton overshot his mark, which has been a weak point in his reputation ever since. Almost all who give any consideration to him quote these statements. "Upon the people of eastern Asia," he declared, "the establishment of a civilized power upon the opposite coast of America, could not fail to produce great and wonderful benefits. Science, liberal principles in government, and the true religion, might cast their lights across the intervening sea. The valley of the Columbia might become the granary of China and Japan, and an outlet to their imprisoned and exuberant population." Of this Roosevelt, who in style and personality was not at all unlike Benton, has much to say. "It seems incredible that any man of even moderate intelligence should not see that no greater calamity could now befall the United States than to have the Pacific slope fill up with a Mongolian population." But we must remember that Benton was a slaveholder. Doubtless, in his mind, since slavery was becoming such a bitter subject of controversy, he saw in the possible importation of hordes of cheap Chinese coolies a means of developing the region, even as many a man in our own time has done in Hawaii and on the Coast. To say that Benton was in this instance sincere is to stretch the benefit of doubt which he deserves, for he most decidedly opposed the inlet of the exuberance of population from Great Britain and would have surely opposed it from Russia and France and Spain. But one can forgive erroneous self-interest when it is carried as ballast upon a clipper ship whose speed would otherwise be uncontrollable. His fellow countrymen refused to give him cargo. Yet there he was, facing the headwinds like those the New Englanders had faced at the Horn. He had to appeal to hard men, practical men, men who could not understand anything but the most obvious, and he had to resort to oratory to keep his own courage fresh. And he promised them that if they settled Oregon, connecting the trade of that river and coast with the Missouri and the Mis-

issippi, they would "open a mine of wealth . . . surpassing the hopes even of avarice itself . . . of things which will purchase the manufactures and products of China at a better profit than gold and silver."

There was a tremendous amount of fustian in Benton's speech, and this has militated against his reputation. But in the light of the development of this country Benton takes his place beside prophets and dreamers whose genius had transcended the material views of life and who showed that the things that make up the stuff of life, of progress, of achievement, cannot be measured by the grocer boy nor appraised by the grocer whose wealth depends upon the frugal consideration of a half cent here and a penny there.

Other men came to the support of Benton: Francis Baylies of Massachusetts, Lewis F. Linn, and others. But the greatest opposition arose from those in the East who seemed to fear the loss of their populations by westward migration. "The interests of the residents of the new territory," said a Mr. Corey, "would be in the Orient rather than in the parent country." Smyth of Virginia opposed the extension of our federative system too far, inasmuch as it was maintained only upon the wish of those so federated. The rights of secession were raising their heads. Mr. Tucker objected on similar grounds. He saw the peoples on the coast trading not with our East, but with China and Japan and the Philippine Islands, and thither their interests would draw them. "What common interests can they have with us on the Atlantic? I have no wish to see introduced among us those distant praetorships whose effects were so pernicious in the Roman Empire."

Few realized then or since how far our actual possession had already gone. Even Roosevelt, while granting that the title of Britain was not more secure than our own, falls short of grasping the extent of contact we had had with the Pacific when he slurs our pretension with the statement that it rested "upon the inaccurate maps of forgotten explorers, or upon the chance landings of stray sailors and traders." Had Roosevelt had some full and accurate account of the early intercourse with

China and the Pacific, he could not have fallen into this error. Roosevelt, for instance, gives Benton credit for the idea that there would arise a "kindred and friendly Republic on the Pacific coast" instead of Jefferson, as we have seen.

Nothing stimulated the interest in Oregon so much as the loss of the little America was compelled to yield to the English. In England George Canning, Foreign Secretary between 1822-27, smarting under the restoration of Astoria in 1818, flayed Parliament for surrendering rights which England appreciated more than did America. Captain Cook had been in the employment of the East India Company when he made his explorations of the Pacific, and never did the British lose sight of the importance of a strong position on the Northwest coast. But the day of the East India Company was done, and the people, once free to avail themselves of opportunities long held from them by that monopoly, thought to regain what they were losing, if possible. The charter of the East India Company expired in 1834, and the China trade was opened to all Britons alike. By that time, Americans were more securely entrenched than almost all others, with the exception of Great Britain, and then, more than ever, was it necessary to fix the boundaries on the Pacific Coast. Had Benton and the others been listened to and emigration encouraged, there would have ensued a normal process of settlement which would have frustrated the assumptions of the British fur interests. They could have had the best part about Vancouver by virtue of squatters' rights, but in August, 1835, they chose rather to offer "half a million dollars for the Bay of San Francisco and certain adjacent territory as a resort for American vessels in the Pacific." "The possession of these harbors," wrote Waddy Thompson, Minister to Mexico, on April 29, 1842, to Webster, "would . . . no doubt, by internal communication with the Arkansas and other west streams secure the trade of India and the whole Pacific Ocean." But Mexico had plans of her own. In a collection of documents dealing with the affairs of upper California, published in the City of Mexico in 1827, it is found that even the Spanish were planning to inaugurate a line of

vessels from Monterey to China. Suggestions for the opening of a canal across the Isthmus of Panama had already been made as early as 1822 and the whole push to the Pacific begun: not through land hunger, for the population did not go much beyond 15,000,000, but through the half-conscious dream of the rape of Asia.

Even those who went for the love of adventure had seen this vision—they had beheld Ignifer, the great diamond. Captain Benjamin Louis Eulalie de Bonneville, of whom Washington Irving wrote at such great length, friend of Thomas Paine and the Marquis de Lafayette, had obtained an impression of the profits to be derived from the fur trade, and had plunged into the Far West. Nathaniel J. Wyeth, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, had been in the employ of Frederic Tudor, the Boston ice king, as a boy and had then felt the hunger for the East. Something of the fibre of old Tudor was in Wyeth, for on September 6, 1835, he wrote his former employer: "The business I am in must be closed not that it might not be made a good one but because those who are now engaged in it are not the men to make it so. The smallest loss makes them 'fly the handle' and such can rarely succeed in a new business." How well Tudor knew this! How good it must have sounded in his ears!

Then comes the most spectacular of them all: Lieutenant John C. Fremont, son-in-law of Benton, and by some called "Pathfinder" and by others, "Pathfollower." "In Mr. Fremont my father found his Ledyard," writes Jessie Benton Fremont. In him, under these circumstances, one might expect to find an enthusiast for the Asiatic trade. Whatever views he held were obtained by actual exploration and investigation in the field. He spoke of the Columbia as one who had seen with his own eyes its possibilities, and to him it had "a value beyond estimation and would involve considerable injury if lost. . . . Commercially the value of the Oregon country must be great, washed as it is by the North Pacific Ocean—fronting Asia—producing many of the elements of commerce—mild

and healthy in its climate—becoming, as it naturally will, a thoroughfare for the East India and the China trade.” Perhaps the story of Benton and Fremont were best told in the words of the daughter and the wife.

“The long contest, the opposition, the indifference, the ignorance, the sneering doubts were in the past. From his own hearth had gone forth the one who carried his hopes to fullest execution . . . And so the two lives became one in the work of opening out our western country to emigration and secure settlement, and in the further acquisition of Pacific territory which ‘gives us from sea to sea the whole temperate zone’ and brings our Pacific ports, across our continent, that long-contested-for India trade. . . . For with our Pacific ports came to us the Asiatic trade which was the underlying cause of all the wars of France and England for a hundred years. France lost India—Canada and the vigilant English navy prevented her from protecting Louisiana. Then Napoleon avenged himself and made the later move which checkmated England by giving over to her rebellious colonies the Mississippi and the Columbia.”

## 3

The rest, the taking of California and of Texas, and all the explosive forces that made for the straightening of the lines of the United States across the continent remain for other histories to dwell upon. Here the work is done. Even the more sober had been convinced, and it remained only for the politicians, like Tyler, to pick up the cry “Fifty-four forty or Fight.” Roosevelt tells us that “Webster did not appreciate the importance of Oregon in the least.” Yet Webster’s son Fletcher tells us that Daniel had said: “You know my opinion to have been, and it now is, that the port of San Francisco would be twenty times as valuable to us as all Texas.” But even in the case of Texas we are told that when the question of annexation was up before Tyler, there were rumours to the effect that Great Britain “purposed using its influence in Texas to bring about

the gradual abolition of slavery in all America, and thus protect the sugar and cotton industries of the East and West Indies from the competition of the United States." And we know that by that time the demand for American cotton in China had completely changed the nature of our trade with that country. Little wonder that the country which before had pooh-poohed the whole idea of Oregon had turned testy. "The American Eagle is flapping his wings," shouted the little chick in Missouri, the *Platte Eagle* (1843), "the precursor [*sic*] of the end of the British Lion, on the shores of the Pacific. Destiny has willed it."

But Destiny prefers men of vision, even though they become somewhat bombastic at times, so long as they can spy out their future before they bump into it. And so in this case the shriek of the *Platte Eagle* has turned from one of delight to one of chagrin. Let us just look at the map of America and see whether the "destined end" was destined or not. We see to-day that the only section on the whole of the Pacific coast that could be self-supporting and independent as a great nation lies just above the line of the United States, about Vancouver Island. "Here," an Englishman now tells us, "is evidently the seat of a coming Pacific power, even if it has not very extensive territory." So we see that the practical men again failed us. Not that the present arrangement with Canada is undesirable and that a greater America would be better; but purely from the point of view of the practical man, the thing sought after was lost, and lost by narrow practical sectionalism.

When the opium war was fought and won, John Quincy Adams, who had despised Floyd, turned jingoistic in his dislike of the haughty, self-sufficient Chinese. But the Government, without ever having taken much interest in the Oriental trade before, now that England had broken down China's resistance, stepped in and demanded most-favoured-nation treatment. The opening of numerous other ports gave considerable stimulus to the westward movement. The building of railroads made it more feasible. The need for shorter and safer and quicker

communication with our own people in the Far West and the Orient had become imperative.

"When the islands of the Pacific Ocean shall be densely populated by civilized peoples, we may require the Panama Canal and others through the Isthmus, but not until then," wrote R. B. Forbes, the China merchant. "Great stress is laid on the shortening of the route from the mouths of the Mississippi to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and it is made to appear that the whole country on both sides of the Father of Waters up to the Great Lakes, instead of sending its products east over railroads toward Europe, is to send them south to New Orleans, Tehuantepec, and all over the Pacific to Japan, China, the Pacific Islands, New Zealand, and Australia." Forbes was a merchant-shipowner, and railroads are not nice things unless they bring cargoes to fill little vessels. The Eastern men were not over zealous in the diverting of trade in other directions. Representative Dayton of New Jersey laughed at the idea of a transcontinental road. "The mines of Mexico and Peru disemboweled would scarcely pay a penny in the pound of the cost. Nothing short of the lamp of Aladdin will suffice for such an expenditure."

George Wilkes of New York, however, suggested that the Government undertake the task; but he was another who saw the Oriental gleam. Then came Asa Whitney, of New York, pioneer railroad promoter and locomotive builder, impressed, after a trip to China, with the great possibilities of the trade. In 1844 he petitioned Congress for a grant of land sixty miles wide, from Michigan to the Columbia, by way of which in thirty days we could go from New York to Amoy in China. "The drills and sheetings of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts and other manufactures," he said in the old, old language, "may be transported to China in thirty days, and the teas and rich silks of China, in exchange come back . . . in thirty days more." Unless this were done, he added, Oregon, whose great future he clearly depicted, would become a separate state, "and draw to her ports all the rich commerce of the Sandwich Islands, China, Japan, Manila, Australia, Java,

Singapore, Calcutta, and Bombay. If the road were built, Oregon would be held in the Union, and the United States would enjoy the commerce of the Far East." And so a great deal of Oriental money, like that of the Sturgis family, went into the construction of railroads, the Boston & Albany, Michigan Central, and the Chicago, Quincy & Burlington. And James J. Hill also held the trade with China as the great object of his railroad construction.

"Give us iron roads!" pleaded Benton, after he had seen the second great compromise in his life—the treaty with England over Oregon—after "we had finally taken a position where our trade with the Oriental kingdoms . . . rendered us more than ever independent of Europe." In 1849, he brought a convention of hard-headed railroad men to their feet when he cried: "Let us make the iron road, and make it from sea to sea—States and individuals making it east of the Mississippi, and the nation making it west. . . . Let us . . . rise above everything sectional, personal, local. Let . . . it be adorned with . . . the colossal statue of the great Columbus—whose design it accomplishes, hewn from a granite mass of a peak of the Rocky Mountains, overlooking the road . . . pointing with outstretched arm to the western horizon and saying to the flying passengers, 'There is the East, there is India.'"

The gold rush was only a token of the regard of destiny for the firm and honest convictions of this man. He was not of the world's greatest, but so long as he lived, he lived fully and honestly. When, after a great and serious political defeat, he continued his life's work regardless, until the veil slipped over his eyes in 1858, both friend and foe vied with each other to do him honour. One is reminded of the statement of Macaulay regarding Warren Hastings: "Our feeling towards him is not exactly that of the House of Commons which impeached him in 1787; neither is it that of the House of Commons which uncovered and stood up to receive him in 1813."

In the park at St. Louis there stands a bronze statue of Thomas Hart Benton and upon the stone where those pathless

feet now stand, below the lifeless arm pointing to the West, there is the following inscription:

THERE IS THE EAST  
THERE LIES THE ROAD TO INDIA

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## CHAPTER XIV

GOLD! GOLD! GOLD!

And lay thou thy treasure in the dust,  
And the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks.

—JOB, xxii, 24.

THE belief that there was gold in the direction of the East had persisted like a buried memory deep in the unconscious of the human race. The universality of this faith with little or no evidence to support it tempts the fancy into strange paths. Can it be that man but dimly remembers having been in certain places before the ice age banished him, and the recollection clings with eternal nostalgia until once again the way thither is revealed? Not to linger among these obscure regions of conjecture, it is yet difficult to understand why a certain faith persists against all the obstruction of facts and in the very face of terror and hardship finds its Moses and its Revelation. So was it with the search for gold.

Yet in the search for the Gold of Ophir we find that every dream, inflated with the wildest imaginative prospects though it may have been, was, nevertheless, an intuition of a demonstrable truth. Columbus found an America. John Law's Mississippi scheme was more than realized in Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase. William Patterson's Darien and John Jacob Astor's Astoria both proved sound in theory even if a little premature in fact. Kendrick's vagaries about an Isthmian canal became Roosevelt's one great achievement. Even the South Sea Bubble was but a feeble intimation of the wealth that Englishmen have actually drawn from the South Seas. So it was that in California rivers of gold have actually poured out of the sands in which legend had located a Pactolus.

For three centuries, according to Hubert Howe Bancroft, California was alleged to contain gold. Bancroft seems to have

hunted down all these rumours and to have found them empty of fact. When gold was actually discovered it was found in no place that had been remotely connected with the legend. Nevertheless, the miracle of the discovery has only emphasized the value of mere rumour as the fingerpost to point man to his destiny.

To most of these gaudy dreams Americans in general had been indifferent. They had stumbled upon California in the prosaic course of the Northwest trade and had not been above doing a little shopkeeping there by the way. Later vessels started a flourishing trade with the Spanish settlements in California, which ultimately became an end in itself, and quite distinct from the Canton trade, though it was often carried on by the same firms. The half-Spanish, half-Indian folk that idled their days away in the shadow of the missions of southern California were a thriftless sort. They would rather drink bad wine from Boston than squeeze the juice out of the grapes that grew wild on their own hills, and wore shoes made of their own hides that had been carried twice around Cape Horn. The Boston men anchored off Santa Barbara or Monterey, and opened shop on board, selling goods over the counter to visitors who came out to them in boats exactly like any corner store on the streets of Lowell or Lynn. To all the rumours of gold they heard about them they turned a deaf ear.

In the country at large there was indeed beginning to be a real need for precious metals. From the time the China trade was initiated there had been a steady drainage of silver to China. "Gold, from being undervalued had ceased to be a currency," said Benton, "had become an article of merchandise, and of export,—and was carried to foreign countries. . . . The Bank of United States was chartered in 1816, and before 1820 had performed one of its cycles of delusive and bubble prosperity, followed by actual and wide-spread calamity. . . . The whole paper system . . . collapsed, spreading desolation over the land, and carrying ruin to debtors. The years 1819, 1820 were a period of gloom and agony. No money either gold or silver. . . . No pride for property,

or produce. No sales but those of the sheriff and marshall. No purchasers at execution sales but the creditor, or some hoarder of money. No employment for industry—no demand for labour—no sale for the products of the farm—no sound of the hammer, but that of the auctioneer, knocking down property.”

In 1837 there was another panic, with distress reaching far and wide, exempting not even New York. Expansion, through speculative attempts to dispose of public lands, had precipitated disaster. Gold had been carried from the East to the West in order to meet the conditions set by Jackson in his Specie Circular of 1836 which lasted all through Van Buren’s administration into 1840. More gold was certainly necessary in a growing country. It had to come from somewhere.

Then came the great discovery. Among the Americans who had been carried to California in one of the three great waves of migration during that decade was a man named Marshall. “Marshall was a queer genius,” Bancroft tells us. “I speak with exactness, for he was both a genius and queer.” In semi-partnership with Captain Sutter, a Swiss caballero of California, Marshall had undertaken to build a mill upon the stream running through their lands. The freshets, aiding and abetting destiny, determined to sweep aside that mill and test the calibre of our hero. Against the evil intentions of the freshets Marshall won, and enjoys the commendation of Bancroft as well, who says: “It was not an unmanly act, the saving of his saw-mill.” After damming up the stream with brush, and seeing that it held, Marshall and his men waited. As he was standing above it he noticed a gleam of metal. He picked it up and carried it to Captain Sutter. In an eagerness that swayed between shouting it out to the whole world and keeping it absolutely secret, he drew the captain into a separate room, displayed his find, and then the two men assayed the first bit of California gold. For the sake of completing the mill, they determined to keep the secret to themselves, but it got out. The men working at the mill promised to remain for six weeks, but while they kept their promise, the temptation to dig at

least on Sundays was too great, and the dry rot of indifference fell upon their other labours. The wife of a little storekeeper wagged her tongue and the news spread. Within a fortnight pandemonium had been released and the gold rush was begun.

Yet the fate of Marshall was the fate of most discoverers. "Of the profits derived from the enterprise," he said, in his old age, "it stands thus: Yankeedom, \$600,000,000; myself individually, \$000,000,000." To Marshall is also given the credit for the discovery of gold in Australia, three years later. Hargraves had been told by Marshall that if he didn't like California he should go to Australia where he was sure there must also be gold. Hargraves went, and fared much better. Great Britain gave him \$25,000 and Australia \$50,000 for his discovery.

At the time of the discovery in California there had been a sluggish migration westward. Men had heard the cry of gold before and had hardly responded. But this time there seemed little doubt in the minds of people. The cry once raised split in two the caravans that had cut their way northward toward Oregon. It trembled down the spine of the continent and set thousands of feet in motion from sea to sea. It swerved vessels out of their courses upon the billows of the deep. It roused sluggish races from their vegetative lethargy. It disorganized business. In New York men crowded the piers hoping for a chance to find standing room on some south-bound vessel, whereas in the Pacific, whaleship, merchantman, and pirate abandoned the water for the beach. Masters and slaves hobbled in close communion. The glories of the Indies were eclipsed and the East was given a momentary respite from Western pretension. And so it was that, lured by the wealth of the Indies, the European world again tripped upon an Eldorado.

## 2

Three channels of migration at once set in—one directly overland by way of well-tried routes, another by the time-honoured passage round the Horn. The more impetuous

sought the inland waterways to New Orleans, and thence across the Isthmus of Darien, and by steamer again north to San Francisco. Men, untried to life on the plains, formed companies of from ten to fifty men, or a hundred, and, pooling their capital, faced the god Chance together. Business men and bankers, hod carriers and college professors, naturalists and writers—all joined in the great exodus from every corner of the globe. Bayard Taylor went by the Isthmus route, while Audubon, the naturalist, turned northward through southern California. Though the overland trail was a long one and full of physical hardships, it was more attractive to manly prowess than the sluggish, sultry, crowded transport by steam or sail. Bancroft says that bad as it was for the first- and second-class passengers, those who went steerage “were treated more like beasts than human beings; to the shipowners they were but so much freight.” Human nature, alleged to be static, changed in the twinkle of an eye, and men once thought gentle and considerate reverted to the tusk and the claw and the game of catch-as-catch-can almost the instant after they had embraced their mothers in farewell. “The emigrants we took on board at San Diego,” says Bayard Taylor, “were objects of general interest. The stories of their adventures by the way sounded more marvellous than anything I had heard or read since my boyish acquaintance with Robinson Crusoe, Captain Cook, and John Ledyard.”

Overland, the stream of eager humanity, from Missouri to the jewelled Nevadas, stretched in one continuous chain of covered wagons. Never in the long, long migration of mankind has there been such an exodus, such a wild escape. Something akin to it may be imagined in the armies of Xerxes and Alexander, Hannibal and Napoleon, as they swept backward and forward across the face of Europe. Something akin to it may have occurred in the great Crusades. The trails of bones and litter that stretched across the plains and mountains of this continent bore witness to the abandon with which men dashed for the fields. There is something pathetic in the way men, lifted from drudgery by this promise, sought to drag along every vestige of

their former bondage with them into the wilderness. Something lovely too, for many of them seemed to realize at once that they were bound to dig foundations as well as diggings.

Yet, in this vast pilgrimage, with gold and better living as the goal, men were destined to experience both degradation and sublimity before they achieved that end. There is the gruesome story, for instance, of the Donner party. About eighty men, women, and children had come to the edge of the desert early in the season and would have made the passes easily through the summer. A guide advised them to take a straight cut across the mountains, a new route he had discovered that would save them about two hundred and fifty miles. They did so. Crossing the desert they lost animals and men, and then, trying to cut their way through the forests, were overtaken by winter and the terrible blasts and blizzards. Soon they were caught in the snows of the Sierras and madness seized them. Cannibalism broke out, ghoulish bestiality took possession of them, and for the sake of preserving an ephemeral and doubtful joy called life, men, women, and children were swept into depths from which they never could emerge. It would have been something to the credit of human nature if those who killed to eat their fellows had walked instead boldly into that snowy sepulchre, inviting death cleanly rather than fall so suddenly and so utterly from the pedestal of civilization. But it was not so, and the account of that tragedy remains one of the most horrible records of human weakness, touched with unaccountable endurance and heartrending loyalty, that this country has ever witnessed.

In California, under the first flush of exuberance after drinking the waters of Pactolus, men beamed upon one another in common delight. With the mountains dripping gold it was easy to respect private property, and so murder was condoned while theft was met with the direst consequences. California, with its "verdant spring vesture" and "arid robes under a metallic sky" shone impartially upon all comers, and the chilled heart of man softened to its wooing, amorous promise. So benign was this influence that our historian Bancroft could

not check himself in his praises under seventy-five adjectives, not counting those hyphenated, ninety-nine nouns, and thirty verbs, all in one sentence. Yet Bancroft was sober.

But not so California. "Drunk! aye, drunk with avarice! Behold the picture; California in her cups," cries Bancroft. And as though we might doubt him, adds, "nevertheless, thou wast drunk, California, as thou well knowest."

Altgether too euphemistic is this charge. It is hard to find that in any respect was life different from what it is and was elsewhere in the world. Everything was intensified, turbulent, boiling, and in the process much invisible muck was brought to the surface, but the individual incidents—the murders, the duels, the robberies, the speculations, the immorality, all that is laid to the evil influence of gold—these things occurred in the same manner, and on the whole, perhaps, even in greater quantity, in the rest of the country. If there was any point at which California was different from any other place in the world it was in the position gold had in relation to other commodities. But even in that there is no more room for criticism than there would be in chiding Pittsburgh for producing more steel than it produces silk.

The stories that have come down to us from that time, of fortunes made and lost in the mines and at the gambling tables, have filled many a volume. Audubon tells of two friends who stood side by side, one having an ounce, the other six thousand dollars' worth of gold at the end of the week. Bancroft "clowns" with the luck of a "nasal-voiced New Englander" who sold half his ticket and worked the rest of his passage for four times its price, and took out \$9,000 within a few days of his arrival, disposed of his claim for \$2,000, and "returned home to marry Hannah and set his traps for a deaconship." With his usual fine sense of justice, he implies a little moral in the story of the Negro who was driven from one place to the other, and, finally, to where no white man would go, only to strike at the bottom of his shaft \$4,000 worth of nuggets.

These cases only emphasized the disappointments, however,

which in that land of rarefied experience were as much more bitter than the successes were sweet. The cost of living was immense. Eggs sold for half a dollar apiece and laundry was six dollars a dozen. "It is cheaper to buy new shirts at auction than to get the dirty ones washed," writes one digger. Men used sacks of beans as paving stones to walk upon, and cook-stoves too, when the effort to satisfy the market only flooded it. Speculation and failures outside the mines and in San Francisco brought desolation and despair to thousands. One old man with white whiskers, who had handled a wholesale grocery business to the amount of six million a year, ended his days as a bell-hop in a hotel. Men had "plunged their souls into a gehenna of inquietude and stinging battle," says Bancroft in his inimitable style, and gives us pathos and gall in many a portrait of humans crushed and ravaged by despair. Suicides occurred by the hundred. Those who had fallen low enough and yet not low enough returned to the East, while others wallowed in debauchery and poverty rather than see their friends and folks again without their hoard. In a little gem of expression, Bancroft thus eulogizes the despised pawnbroker who hung up his imitation Apples of Hesperides in the land of gold and of poppy.

"Oh, my prophetic soul, mine uncle! Many a proud head has bowed beneath the symbolic balls for the first time in California. Could the pledges at the shops of San Francisco pawn-brokers rise up and speak, what tales they would tell; of what sighs, and poverty, and struggles, and despair they would speak; of what broken vows, of what heartless cruelty, of what devoted love and self-sacrifice, of what agonizing deaths! What touching, silent eloquence in those worn and faded articles, many of them once pledges of affection, now pledges of necessity!" The Temple of Distress, he calls it.

Reflecting upon these occurrences one wonders how it was that civilized people, precipitated so suddenly into the wilderness, were so helpless in the face of the elements and their own passions. There seems to have fallen upon every human

faculty a great void, or a paralysis. Certainly hypnotism was never conducted on so tremendous and wholesale a scale. The mind was so centred on gold that it became bereft of reason and invention. A man building a canvas house for himself was without tacks and paid a new arrival gold for iron in equal proportions, instead of using his wits to devise some means of lashing the cloth to the frame. Men spent fortunes for lodging, instead of finding for themselves safe and clean spots in the open in a land which, at worst, is like an unpleasant spring. The gregarious instinct, fostered by the belief that the reward of luck is pleasure, brought men into the town and there sprang up instantly all that is vicious in civil life, unrestrained by any realization that happiness is more generally the result of unsatisfied desire than of desire glutted to satiety. And so gold itself ceased to give any respite. An altogether different affair it had been for Europe in the past. Then the appetite for Oriental riches had been well balanced not only with sufficient calories of toil, but with the vitamins of a superior culture. Along with the jewels and the gold of the Indies came the beauty and the ennoblement of its art. It was something in itself to desire such fineness. But here suddenly men were rushed into the troughs of Eldorado and they found what hardly served to ease the cramps of physical hunger, let alone the thirst of the soul.

But there was one influence that was already stirring the heart of that little community. With the inrush of men from every corner of the world, a cosmopolitanism permeated the social atmosphere that, notwithstanding its evil reactions, was nevertheless a permanent good. The streets and the gambling houses and even the few more orderly abodes were alive with stimulating influences. Hawaiians and Chinese, South Americans and Australians, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Swedes, and Danes had not only to learn some sort of common speech, but to test their individual wits against strange habits and devices. To this day San Francisco has not lost that latent charm which is like some indefinable blend of tea, and remains one of the loveliest cities in America. True that the welding had to be burnt into a solid mass by the fires of hatred and conflict. True

that the massacre of Chinese was as uncalled for as it was heinous and vile. But that was the weaker element burning itself out, and it was directed against these unfortunate Orientals only because, when it met the more violent Occidentals, it became too self-destructive. Still, the brutal instincts found expression in strife and murder amongst the whites as well as in this contemptuous outburst against the yellows. It was not till 1856 that the outraged forces for decency locked horns with the degenerates of all races and worsted them. "If iniquity here was more unblushing," says Bancroft, "there was less of cant and hypocrisy, less of covert deceit and pharisaical humbug, less of that white lying and envy and jealousy which constitutes the pabulum of older religious and fashionable societies. Loyalty to an honest and enlightened ideal is, after all, the truest morality."

## 3

One cannot fully understand the thing that took place in California unless one first discovers the process of selection that went on in the migration. The question arises as to why some went and others remained. Why did not the whole world just rise up and go? The '40's, as will be remembered, were days of depression after wild land speculation. Fortunes had been ruined that could not be retrieved except by slow processes, if at all. As in war, so in disaster, civilization takes its toll in young lives. The older men, having made a muddle of their lives, send their young ones to the front or the frontier to retrieve their own misfortunes. And in the gold rush it was largely the younger ones who were now allowed to go on the great adventure, "to dig for gold and graves in the barrens of California," as a judge at Litchfield, Connecticut, declared. It seems that those who stayed at home sang pæans of praise more than those who went. "The extensive and fertile plains of the western country may yield richer harvests [than those of Connecticut] . . . the golden regions of California may sooner fill the pockets with the precious metals," said the Reverend Pierpont, grandfather of the Morgans, but in spite of "this exhausting

process of emigration, our population which, in the year 1800, was 41,671, has increased to the number of 46,171 [by 1851].” They could afford to increase the population now that so many mouths had gone west and so much gold was going east, and the wherewithal to indulge in the largess of the world’s good things had been obtained.

“We knew that there was more or less gold in the seams of those untrodden mountains; but we did not foresee that it would build cities in the waste and plant hotels and gambling-houses among the haunts of the grizzly bear,” declared Parkman. “We knew that a few fanatical outcasts were groping their way across the plains to seek an asylum from gentile persecution; but we did not imagine that the polygamous hordes of Mormon would rear a swarming Jerusalem in the bosom of solitude itself. We knew that, more and more, year after year, the trains of emigrant wagons would creep in slow procession towards barbarous Oregon or wild and distant California; but we did not dream how Commerce and Gold would breed nations along the Pacific, the disenchanting screech of the locomotive break the spell of weird mysterious mountains, woman’s rights invade the fastnesses of the Arapahoes, and despairing savagery, assailed in front and rear, veil its scalplocks and feathers before triumphant commonplace.” But he failed to add, with Hamlin Garland, that behind these ploughmen and their wives and daughters, and the disinherited of the world was the “force of landlordism” goading them on into that desolate business of pioneering, and the mania for speculation sending thousands into the goldfields who could have earned much more and suffered less in the stolid pursuits of ordinary labour.

In time men settled down to digging gold in the same prosaic manner in which they dig for coal or iron or lead. And California has become another state in a greater union. With all its climate and all its wealth and all its transplanted culture, California has not yet fulfilled possibilities that were latent in her gold. Gold has been greatly misappraised and much of ill attributed to it. But is it really more fruitful of evil than love?

There is hardly a basic human quality that is not related to it. Look into the Thesaurus and there you will find that the thought of gold had been woven into the very fabric of the human conscience. There it is synæsthetic with warm, glowing elegance, security, subservience, goodness, action, affections, religion, idolatry, creative thought, hope, moderation, opinion, approbation, precept, and youth. Even love, which is purer than gold, has been dubbed Golden-winged Eros, while patriotism cast a metaphor after the sun when it named a turbulent bar across a harbour in the Pacific the Golden Gate. And the world's dreams of Heaven, virtue, good works, and all that makes up our conventional civilization are only the fulfilment of our secret wishes for gold. Or perhaps, after all, our dreams of gold are but our wish-fulfilment for Heaven.

"One class live to the utility of the symbol," said Emerson, "esteeming health and wealth a final good. Another class live above this mark to the beauty of the symbol; as the poet, and artist, and the naturalist, and man of science. A third class live above the beauty of the symbol to the beauty of the thing signified; these are wise men." To judge from the manner in which men have from time immemorial wasted their substance in the seldom satisfied search for gold would seem to indicate that they are living up to the thing symbolized. An Australian prospector has recently written an article for the *Atlantic Monthly* in which he shows that as soon as the prospector makes a find, he moves on, the love of the strange and lonely life rather than the precious metals being his true lure. Every man seeks for himself his own salvation. Most of us are weighted down and vaulted, and the ways of life are opened for us only through arduous thrift and artless spending. When suddenly the cry of gold lifts us above this ponderous inquietude, little does it become the pharisees to call us worshippers of Mammon. Is not Heaven said to be paved with gold?

It is those who live to the utility of the symbol that debase it. They barter all their better impulses for the attainment of gold only to squander it at the gaming table. Had they loved

gold for the beauty of the thing signified, they would have found in California their freedom. But they did not really love liberty. When they left civilization and its prohibitions behind they became conscious of their nakedness and began to feel sinful. They loved their palliaments more than their emancipation. They did not trust themselves. And they fell into debauchery and license.

Had they loved their gold for the beauty of the thing symbolized, for the relationship it bears to all that is fine and permanent in life, then might a new order have sprung up in that wilderness. For their gold they would then have bought all that is priceless and majestic from the farthest reaches of the globe and in that new Hesperides would have grown up a life and a culture to vie with the beauty and the splendour of the East. Some in California felt that. "Again and again," says Audubon, "I am overwhelmed by the thought that I am at these dreary mines—I, who started intent on drawing and obtaining new specimens—to have so different a destiny thrust upon me, is bewildering."

And so, instead of Arcadia we have business, buildings, and boosting—a great world of more commerce, wealth beyond the dreams of the most opulent Oriental potentate—but not the Indies. That is yet to be. One can buy it already made, but one cannot make it in a moment. In centuries to come it will obtain upon the Pacific coast. There is every conceivable element from which it may draw its blood and its inspiration. The power that brought men across mountain, plain, and sea may yet accomplish this also.

Who will ever measure the total good and evil, gold and alloy that came from that westward employment. In 1851 alone, \$81,000,000 in gold was mined, while the first half-century of the discovery netted nearly a billion and a half of gold. Was this the dream of Columbus? Was this the scent that mankind followed ever since Solomon commanded his pilots to "go along with his stewards to the land that of old was called Ophir, but now the Aurea Chersonesus, which belongs to India, to fetch gold." If for his Golden Chersonese he had looked on the

eastern shores of the Pacific instead of the Malay Peninsula, how different would have been the story of mankind. Better? No. But in the three thousand years that have intervened this continent would have had time to grow and ponder, to mellow with an age which for us is still to come and toward which we have only contributed a worthy impulse. Our works are yet to bear their fruits, and time alone will appraise them.

## 4

The covered wagons were toiling painfully across the plains, requiring months of monotonous perseverance during the summer to bring a family over the passes to California. Steamers were flapping their side-wheels down the coasts and up again with the irritating precision that lacked sufficient speed and required a dangerous, sickening, costly break at the Isthmus of Panama. California was bursting with demands, a tithe of which could not be met, leaving hungry stomachs and despoliated profits, and speculation and waste where gold dust should have turned barrenness to beauty overnight. Speed! If only there were means of helping feet to keep pace with their desires! The gold won't last till we get there, seemed to be the fear. How to get to California on wings was the thought that kept restless men frantic through the nights. And here again China and the Indies came to the rescue.

There had been need for speed before, when the art of smuggling opium into China in the face of Chinese interdiction, British competition, pirates, and the northeast monsoons, was being developed. While American ships had always gone with more canvas and lighter hulks than the British, there was still room for improvement. When the Opium War resulted in the opening of other ports in China, the increased importance of the tea trade had its reaction in the specialization of ships for that end. Eight million dollars' worth of tea came into New York the year after the war, and the question of distribution and of even beating the British in their own ports, after the demise of the East India Company and the termination of the British Navigation Acts became more and more the object of American ship-

owners. For nearly twenty years before the discovery of gold in California they were experimenting in the direction of the clipper style of ship, keen slender boats with yacht-like lines and carrying great clouds of canvas. It is said that the fine curve of the bow which is one of the distinguishing marks of the perfect clipper, and contributed so much to her grace, was suggested to Donald McKay, the great builder of clippers, by a Malay proa brought home by one of the China ships from Singapore. Commodore Perry, in the record of his expedition to Japan, addressing a king of Siam, speaks of having seen one of his vessels-of-war, "one of beautiful form and construction." He assured him that if he would send one of his ships to America, he could "promise the officers a friendly and honourable welcome." Later, at Singapore, he says, "the natives still offer for sale models of the various descriptions of the Malay war, pirate, and sailing proas; and most of them present exceedingly beautiful specimens of graceful form." Perry was so "struck with the beauty of the model of the sailing proa that he purposed sending one home to the New York Yacht Club." Likewise, the practice of partitioning ships into watertight compartments was common in Chinese junks many years before.

The clippers had their inception in the later period of the China trade. Though they are associated with our maritime enterprise everywhere on the seas, and some of the fastest raced between New York and Liverpool, their most spectacular exploits and conquests took place around the Horn, between New York and Canton. There they were triumphant. Whatever envy and jealousy obtained among the nations in pursuit of the teas and silks of the East, before the clippers all stood in admiration and from all throats came nothing but praise. In the eyes of every seaman the love of a fine ship for its own sake placed trade in the category of art. When one of the earlier tea clippers appeared on the Thames, an English newspaper described her as a thing so beautiful that "envy itself could find no flaw in her."

One of the most famous of the earlier clippers was the *Houqua*, named after the *hong* merchant of Canton. A model of this

ship was presented to Houqua when it reached China. The *Houqua* was launched on Friday, towed down on Friday, went to sea on Friday, and arrived in Hong Kong on Friday. Whether that had anything to do with her fate is for sailors to tell, but she foundered in 1865 in a typhoon in the China seas.

What would have been the fate of all the clippers if gold had not been discovered in California is hard to say. Doubtless they would have been slowly supplanted by the steamer without ever having truly come into their own. But when suddenly a whole growing nation wanted to be lifted bodily from one end of the continent and wafted speedily across to the other, men's imaginations could not permit themselves to be shackled to mere progress. Men wanted speed. The speed of the winds, the speed of lightning. Then it was that all the creative impulses in a people long bowed down by necessity and puritanical notions of thrift burst their bonds and gave expression to joy and abandon such as only the most pious had ever believed themselves menaced by. Then it was that a ship became the symbol of happiness, and none was so devout that he could not give way to cheers and a prayerful god-speed, and wink an innocent "Don't mention it" at the enormous stakes that were placed on the races. And from the harbours of the Atlantic coast, bound for 'Frisco, rose these things of air and sinuous grace—*The Flying Cloud*, *Witch of the Waves*, *Shooting Star*, *Lightning*, *Gamecock*, and *Sovereign of the Seas*.

With the appearance of McKay's clippers—and others followed him—and their emotional and æsthetic appeal, the habit of racing, which had a purely practical start, attracted the interest of the whole world and became an international sport of the first magnitude. The first great race was staged in 1850 when, backed by thousands and thousands of dollars in wagers, with the whole of Manhattan and the Coast mad with excitement, seven clippers slipped out of New York harbour in a race to San Francisco. With every hold crammed with cargo, they were to make the terrible passage around Cape Horn in midwinter. One of McKay's ships, the *Sea-Witch*, fighting her

way sheathed and caked in ice, against darkness and bitter head winds, amidst floes and icebergs and a constant drive of snow and sleet, made the passage in ninety-seven days, till then an unimagined record. The next year, the *Sea-Witch* raced against two other clippers. Almost side by side they struggled for two weeks through the black weather below the Horn, unwilling to yield an inch of sail to the storm, battling in that far-off and lonely place, with the whole world anxious and expectant, and fortunes pledged on the result. One captain put padlocks on his sails and is reported to have stood upon his bridge, defying God to make him take in sail. There was no wireless then to answer the question of the watchers, day by day. Not a word between New York and San Francisco, and sometimes not another word till the ships had circled the globe, themselves outspeeding any news of them that might reach home. But the return was chronicled in headlines that reached all across the page of the newspapers of the day, straining the conservative forms of type then in use to greater and greater magnitude in an attempt to meet the greatness of the occasion. By the middle of the 'fifties the whole East coast was living from one race to another, and received a new impetus from the excitement caused by the entrance of the British upon the scene. The British had been admiring and copying, and now they were for trying what they could do in the way of getting tea home from Canton more rapidly than the Americans. So four American and three British clippers engaged in a race from Canton to Deal. American clippers came in first, second, and third.

But it was at home in their own harbours, and above all in the harbour of New York, that the clippers received their greatest ovations. In 1849, 775 vessels left the Atlantic harbours for San Francisco, 214 of which belonged to New York and 151 to Boston. They carried 91,405 passengers and cargoes. Shipbuilding increased by leaps and bounds, giving life to a nation's phantasies that for centuries had found no such expression. For more than two centuries the Americans had followed the sea as devotedly as any sea rover of Iceland. For more

than half a century, the hopes, the recollections, the fears of these maritime towns had been in the Far East. They had started with no advantage except the sharpness of their keels and the keenness of their wits which they had to try out against great and princely monopolies. Aided by their poverty alone, as Jefferson had said, they fought every step of the way—for the most part dumbly, and almost without self-consciousness. But now with the Pacific almost within their grasp, and the whole continent between, the spirit of the nation came to maturity. So long inarticulate, it now found expression in the lines and canvas of these ships.

It was this that gave substance to the clipper era. It was not only that the clippers were the most rapid and the most beautiful sailing ships that had ever appeared on the sea—or may ever appear again; it was not that they piled up fabulous profits for their owners; it was that for once the American mania for speed, for money itself, had gathered to itself during those long decades of unheralded and unsung experience upon the seas and in the Orient a sufficient content of experience and emotion to ennoble all this to the heights of pure art itself. As it happened, when the time came for someone to crystallize it, or to distill it from the national consciousness, there was not only a practical man to do it, but a great artist as well, and out of the utilitarian purposes of the merchant-shipowners he evolved a new type of vessel and met, in the pent-up love of the sea among the Americans, an instant and electric response to the models he turned out.

The clipper races were therefore much more than the expression of the sport instinct. They were imbued with the emotions of a great national art. Great art does not flourish save among people who share the artist's work, at least in their appreciation of it. A great cathedral, a play, an opera—these the average American then as now had small capacity to criticize or to love. But decades of experience had saturated even the common street loafers of Manhattan—of all the New England coast—with love for and knowledge of the sea. Whatever the man in the street of New York or Boston did not know

in 1850, he knew a ship. When Donald McKay, meeting the demands of the shipowners for faster and ever faster ships to reach Canton with, put into the fashioning of keel and sail such beauty as never before had been seen on the ocean, such perfect functioning in perfect grace, he knew that all up and down the coast a world of nobodies would thrill to the rake of the mast as to a note of music, and feel the curve of the bow as some feel a lovely line of poetry. Even the humblest seaside village whose idea of a holiday was a trip to one of the greater harbours to see a new ship launched was full of eyes and hearts which long experience had trained to see and feel just this. When a clipper slipped out of New York on a dash for San Francisco and Canton, she carried, for a good part of the population, not cargo alone, but the burden of their whole inner life. When she came splashing back, a thousand of her onlookers, shouting, singing, even weeping, had mentally commanded her all the way, and ten thousand had sailed before her masts. Thus athletic contests between the cities of Greece had been ennobled in the odes of Pindar. Thus inarticulate centuries of fighting had come to grandeur in the battles of Homer.

Everyone connected with the clipper shared in its glory. Captains along the New York water-front were followed and admired at a distance like emperors, and every member of a clipper crew, besides being the most highly paid seaman of the time, took a personal pride in the achievements of his ship, and, in the eyes of all landlubbers, was haloed in its glory. When a clipper ship came into New York harbour, she was painted and polished to the utmost brightness, sides of velvety blackness, white trimmings, brass fixtures flashing sunlight at every point, and she docked with all her crew singing.

If out of the wealth of the Indies and the gold of California there has yet risen no Taj Mahal, there have been the clipper ships. The whaler has had his Melville, but hundreds have sung the glory of the clipper. There have been verses by men never otherwise inspired, and not one of them that does not have a strain of genuine beauty. Even in their names they are baptised in poetry: *Flying Fish*, *Queen of the East*, *Typhoon*,

*Witch of the Wave, Flying Dragon, Storm King, Golden Fleece, Norseman, Twilight, and Shooting Star.*

Oh, again to hear the Lascar's rousing "chanty" in the morn,  
When we broke away the anchor to sail home around the Horn!  
Oh, to see the white sails pulling, feel the lift beneath the keel,  
With the trade-wind's push behind her and the roll that made her reel!

The old clipper days are over, and the white-winged fleets no more,  
With their snowy sails unfolded, fly along the ocean floor;  
Where their house-flags used to flutter in the ocean winds unfurled,  
Now the kettle-bellied cargo tubs go reeling round the world.

But 'twas jolly while it lasted, and the sailor was a man;  
And it's good-bye to the Lascar and the tar with face of tan;  
And it's good-bye mother, once for all, and good-bye girls on shore;  
And it's good-bye, brave old clipper-ship that sails the seas no more!  
—From *Boston Transcript*.

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## CHAPTER XV

### CHINA CAPITULATES

**O** ROCK! when wilt thou break!" These are said to have been the last words of Francis Xavier, dying late in the year 1552 on an island off the coast of China after having been refused admission to the mainland. A few years ago, when some publication offered a prize for the line of poetry best describing any book of the year, the award was given for a verse from Tennyson epitomizing Ross's "Changing Chinese." The verse was "Break! Break! Break!"

For three hundred years the Chinese had maintained an impregnable front against the proselytizing influences from the West. From the time of Marco Polo there had been instances in which Europeans, especially Jesuits, had penetrated as far as Peking. But they had in no wise disturbed the bland contentment of the invisible Son of Heaven and his self-complacent subjects. Even at the beginning of the 19th Century, the behaviour of the Chinese had not changed.

Chien Lung, for example, was a Manchu of considerable cultivation, and a lover of the arts. Secure within his palace in Peking in the early part of the century, and ruler over the greatest empire then in existence, he sought neither to extend his sway nor to augment his exchequer, professing but one aim—"to maintain a perfect governance and to fulfill the duties of the State." As the Son of Heaven who alone could pray to God, it was hardly to be expected that he would implore alien monarchs for improvements within his realms. In an age when European kings maintained their powers by force of arms alone, Chien Lung received the prayers of his subjects as a worthy son of God. The Divine Rights of Kings was no strange doctrine at the time, and Chien Lung found little in the reports that came to him from the aliens at his gates to change his attitude.

Little wonder then that when the importunate Jasons begged for more ports in exchange for machine-made products, he met their prayers with sublime unconcern. His attitude was that of an artist who scorns mechanics. "Strange and costly objects do not interest me," he said quite frankly. "I . . . have no use for your country's manufactures." An indifference founded upon economic self-sufficiency and a material standard of living as yet superior to that of Europeans became a positive means of self-defence when the Chinese contemplated the spectacle of British India.

The British East India Company was the greatest corporation of its time—the giant Trust. At first and for a long time the danger to China from the West presented itself in the general aggressiveness of this company; later it appeared in the more subtle form of opium. The British East India Company had drawn to itself the intellectual genius of the age. Because Thomas Mill had written a history of India, the company had taken him in and in a short time he became the most influential man in the concern. Under the driving influence of his father, John Stuart Mill had found as much scope for his economic studies in the same company to make him a seer as his father had found to make him a satrap. Charles Lamb had received financial and intellectual sustenance from it. Macaulay had also joined its forces, giving perhaps more than receiving prestige from the connection. The whole Thackeray family were servants of the company. And out of the very soul of India, it would seem, there had come these far-reaching influences on the world. Had the governors of the company understood some of the economic and political doctrines emanating from its guiding geniuses (they hired Mill, but fired his theories) they might not so soon have fallen into decline. But they moved from India to China with the same bold, daring, unseeing, Martian implacability that conquered India—but in China met their Nemesis.

Against the increasing competition of the Americans, the grand gesture with which the governors of the company had been accustomed to take to themselves the goods of the world

no longer sufficed. The machinery of this great organization with its absentee proprietorship in this instance failed against the simple results of a small trade whose methods were thrifty and industrious because they had to be. The Americans had come into the Far East with their small sloops and petty wares, content with large risks and small profits, whereas individual British merchants of the same type were debarred therefrom by the monopoly of the company.

"At the close of the War of 1812 the Americans resumed their China trade with a rush," says Tyler Dennett. "The volume of trade, exports and imports together, mounted from \$7,000,000 to \$19,000,000 in four years. In the season 1817-18 the gross amount of the American imports and exports at Canton actually exceeded those of the British East India Company, while the American tonnage employed was 18,000 as compared with 21,000 for the British." The American trade was sapping the strength of the East India Company so that by 1820 the Court of Directors of the company stated before a committee of the House of Lords that "their net loss on English produce shipped from London to Canton in the preceeding 23 years had been £1,688,103." This the company claimed was largely due to the conservatism of the Chinese who could not be induced to give up their preference for Chinese materials and styles. As though Occidentals would consent readily to any outer influence on their styles! The hearings in Parliament at the time of the dissolution of the East India Company in 1834 give an elaborate and laudatory account of American commercial virtues as compared with the ineptitude of the company.

The end of the company did not mean the end of the concerted attack of the West on the commercial exclusiveness of China. They had found a deadly weapon, and that was opium. This China feared more than the guns of the foreigners, for it was Indian opium that threatened to stupefy her people. When, therefore, after the passing of the East India Company, British merchants sought to take back from America some of the trade they had lost, it was Indian opium that gave them their

medium, and China's contumely their pretext. Lord Napier was refused recognition by the Chinese in a series of edicts and memorials that only amplified the low opinion they had of all foreigners. He died at Macao in 1834 without having attained anything at all. The more fearful the Chinese became, the more arrogantly they acted. Contempt is frequently the reaction of a superior civilized person to fear. An animal growls when in danger; man is struck dumb. Contempt and silence are one. The Europeans and Americans tried to cover up the immorality of the opium trade by a plea for equality according to the laws of nations. That China could not grant. She had only to look upon India to see what equality between the Lion and the Lamb really meant.

As we have seen, the Government at Peking dispatched Commissioner Lin to Canton in 1839 for the purpose of eradicating, once and for all time, the smuggling of opium into China. The traffic had reached the point where Chinese were more and more trading tea, silks, and nankeens for opium. Something drastic had to be done. Heretofore, what with the Chinese method of "squeeze" and bribery, the efforts to suppress it had only been made ludicrous. For example, in 1816, the *Lion* of New York had been fined \$2,000 "imposed by the Hoppo for suspicion of smuggling on board ship." The *Lion* had had \$30,000 worth of opium. The suspicion was well founded, but the fine was merely squeeze. Americans as well as all other foreigners were equally guilty. William Gray, of Boston, on May 4, 1824, had issued instructions to Captain Nathaniel Kinsman: "If there is no immediate prospect of an advance in the price of Opium, an early sale is to be recommended, as there will probably be a large quantity shipped in the course of the next three months." Forbes confessed: "I shall not go into any argument to prove that I considered it right to follow the example of England, the East India Company, the countries that cleared it [opium] for China, and the merchants to whom I always have been accustomed to look up to as exponents of all that was honourable in trade."

Forbes made a fortune in the opium trade alone. The firm of

N. & G. Griswold of New York openly avowed its share in the traffic. Our citizens, they wrote to Webster, "have always been more or less engaged in the trade, and probably always will be. We believe that ultimately the Emperor will find it necessary to legalize the traffic under the imposition of heavy duties." How flagrant had been the violation of China's wishes and laws is shown by the fact that prominence has been gained by one outstanding firm only—D. W. Olyphant and Co. of New York—for refusing to engage in this illicit and vicious enterprise. Compare the evil consequences of the use of liquor and of opium and multiply the effects of the infraction of our prohibition law, and something of a parallel is reached with the situation of China in her effort to eradicate the evil. Add to that the fact that, as C. F. Remer, in his excellent thesis in manuscript at Harvard Library points out, American ships dealing in opium had so far affected exchange that after 1827 less silver was brought hence from America, and by 1834, opium had taken the place of silver entirely as a means of obtaining Chinese commodities, and we see how China was being demoralized and robbed as by a highwayman. When Commissioner Lin swooped down upon Canton and demanded the surrender of all foreign opium, imprisoning all foreigners in their warehouses until his order was complied with, the British Superintendent of Trade, Captain Eliot, gathered together from all of them 20,283 chests worth more than \$10,000,000.

For forty years the traffic had been interdicted by imperial command. Violation after violation had occurred. Chinese smugglers and traders had been punished, and more than one attempt made to strangle a culprit in Chinese fashion in front of the foreign factories as a warning to the white men. Yet there were those among us who sought to rationalize these iniquities by adverting to the laws of nations and equality in the defence of a foreign-made war.

"It is time that this enormous outrage upon the rights of human nature and upon the first principle of the rights of nations should cease," thundered John Quincy Adams during the war that followed Lin's action. "The cause of the war is the

*kowtow!* the arrogant and insupportable pretensions of China, that she will hold commercial intercourse with the rest of mankind, not upon terms of equal reciprocity, but upon the insulting and degrading forms of relations between lord and vassal. . . . *Tandandum, ornandum, tollendum*, was the unvarying policy of the treatment he [Lord Macartney] received. It is humiliating to think, that not only the proudest monarchs of Europe, but the most spirited, enlightened, and valorous nations of Christendom have submitted to this tone and these principles of intercourse so long as to have given them, if prescription could give them, a claim of right and a colour of conformity to the law of nations."

Adams had written all this with the intention of its being published after being read before the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1841 in the *North American Review*, but a Boston newspaper obtained a copy and by mistake published it, thus preventing its appearance in the *Review*. However, it had not been permitted to go unchallenged, and the editor of the *Review* would not use it unless the Chinese side of the case were more justly presented. Adams found considerable opposition in many quarters of the country where high-flown language had not succeeded in blinding people to the gross injustice committed against China.

The fallacy in this reasoning was patent. It is clear that England did not wage this war for the sole purpose of foisting opium upon China. Nevertheless, while the wholesale and unreasonable exclusiveness of China was wrong, it was not without its parallel in the very actions of England at the time in granting an exclusive monopoly to the East India Company, and all that went with it, and with the spheres of influence and special concessions that have since been imposed upon that unfortunate country. Nor are we hesitating at this very day to shut our doors in the face of Orientals with as much haughty disdain—however just from an economic point of view—as China did then. Would Japan be justified in waging war against the United States on the grounds of racial discrimination? And what would happen if, because the resident Japanese

wanted their *saki* and their *beeru* here, and because we tried to suppress their smuggling of liquor, they called for their warships to enforce its importation in violation of the Volstead Act? Japan might easily use the racial equality issue as a pretext for forcefully undermining the effectiveness of that amendment, if she were a whisky-producing country.

That this was the sentiment of a great many at that time is not without definite proof. One who was later to accomplish much in building up on those ruins a basis for good relations between China and America—Caleb Cushing—had already given expression to a more rational regard for justice. “God forbid,” declared Cushing, “that I should entertain the idea of coöperating with the British Government in the purpose, if purpose it has, of upholding the base cupidity and violence and high-handed infraction of all law, human and divine, which have characterized the operation of the British, individually and collectively, in the seas of China.”

The American merchants were, on the whole, inclined to yield to China. There were larger rewards of the trade which they had gleaned and which they could not afford to ignore. They importuned Congress not to go too far in pressing China to grant, by treaty, rights which they had already secured by personal and private understanding. The American Government had acknowledged China's rights not only to enforce this law, but had openly declared that it would not attempt to protect any American ship caught in the act of smuggling—and that policy was maintained throughout.

The English withdrew and urged the Americans to do likewise, but they refused. The war broke out, and while it lasted, the Americans conducted not only their own trade as usual, but that of the British as well. The war was won. Ports were elsewhere opened to the English, Hongkong became British property, speculation in anticipation of increased prices in opium after this wholesale destruction by the Government netted many a trader a neat little fortune. The Laws of Nations had been “vindicated.” China was breaking.

## 2

Naturally, America sought to secure every advantage that was gained by England by the war. Remer points out that it had long been felt necessary to deal more directly with the people in the northern districts, where furs were in greater demand, through other ports. That was only one aspect of the opening up of China. But the American merchants still felt that they could best settle their own problems individually with the Chinese. They were suspicious of any diplomatic mission, and looked with apprehension upon the coming of Cushing who had been appointed Commissioner to secure a treaty. "With spurs on his heels, and mustachios and imperial, very flourshing!" was the impression he made upon one American merchant. China began to see yards and yards and yards of swaddling-bands of diplomacy in the hands of her physicians, now that the Cæsarean operation was over. Cushing waited for the Imperial Commissioner, Keying, to arrive from Peking for negotiations. Through the Governor at Canton, Cushing proceeded to open channels for advancement to Peking. The Chinese exerted all their arts of evasion to prevent his doing so. Keying had written to the American consul: "The August Emperor, compassionating people from afar, certainly cannot bear that the American minister by a circuitous route should go to Peking, wading through over-flowing difficulties." Cushing intimated that wading was his passion, and that he would go to Peking. Finally, when the Chinese saw that he was in earnest, they hastened to forestall it—and Keying came to Canton.

Against the suave courtship of the Chinese, in sharp contrast, is the brusque, caveman-like directness of the foreigners. Cushing bore two letters to the Emperor from the President. Fortunately Cushing's better nature made him rely upon his own judgment and not upon the text or the tactics therein devised for him. One letter read: "I, John Tyler, President of the United States of America—which states are: Maine, New

Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Louisiana, Indiana, Mississippi, Illinois, Alabama, Missouri, Arkansas, and Michigan—send you this letter of peace and friendship, signed by my own hand. . . . Now, my words are,” was followed by, “It is proper and according to the will of Heaven.” Caleb Cushing, Tyler declared, is “one of the wise and learned men” of America. He is going to Pekin to make a treaty, so you, Mr. Emperor, “Let it be just. . . . Let it be signed by your own Imperial hand. It shall be signed by mine, by the authority of our great council, the Senate.” It was too bad the Senate had to detract from the imperiousness of these commands which were according to the will of Heaven. Tyler was too much of a backwoods democrat to be able to play emperor with Oriental suavity.

Nevertheless, despite the “mustachios and imperial” Cushing was a gentleman, though his Occidental impatience was prone to make him use his spurs a bit. Despite these appurtenances, or possibly because of them, Cushing’s mission was a success. “Save for the fact that it was raised to diplomatic dignity,” says Tyler Dennett, the preliminary negotiations were “otherwise not at all dissimilar to a thousand daily passages in any bazaar in Asia for forty centuries.” Cushing won, and his treaty is a milestone in the history of the relations between the East and the West. The Chinese were for letting well enough alone. Whatever England had gained they were now ready enough to concede to the others without formal conventions. They still resorted to flowery language tinged with condescension. Courteous and friendly as the conference was from beginning to end, though not free from threat and a show of force, both sides entertained for each other not a little private scorn. Keying, reporting the results to the Emperor, referred to the demands as “foolish” and their sense “so meanly and coarsely expressed, the words and sentences so obscure, and there was such a variety of errors, that it was next to impossible to point

them out" because of "their stupid ignorance." Cushing, on his part, showed his respect for the Emperor in a letter he addressed to his friend Dr. Francis Amory Holman, from Houston, Texas, on February 5, 1847.

"DEAR SIR:

"In the hurry of my departure from New England, I neglected to attend to an important matter connected with my friend Ching-bang-whang-ching-fu, Emperor of China.

"You know perhaps that during my visit to China I resided at the court in Pekin, and became familiarly acquainted with him and the different members of his family, as well as his most distinguished officers of state.

"He is very anxious to establish an asylum for the Insane, near Pekin, as some of the members of his family have become lunatics."

Cushing then indulges in some witty compliments tending to prove the special qualification of the doctor for the post with "this most fastidious Emperor and his fastidious Court. I would advise you at once to take up your residence at the Chinese Museum, and remain there until the ship arrives which he will send out for you. . . . It is not improbable we may meet in China, as I intend, as soon as we have conquered Mexico, and I am established there as Viceroy, to open a communication with China by way of Steam Ships."

Thus do diplomats appear when caught off stage. Still, it is no enviable position for any man placed between the upper millstone of foreign Machiavellianism and the nether millstone of native reprobation. "I remember my surprise at seeing Caleb Cushing," says the late Senator Lodge in his *Memoirs*. "In our Free Soil Republican household his name was anathema as a pro-slavery Massachusetts Democrat who had sold himself to the South for a cabinet office." But Cushing never became the Viceroy of Mexico.

In the history of our relations with China, however, Cushing had placed the first rock in the hole which Western aggression had made in the wall of Chinese integrity.

## 3

When the foreigners came to China she was secure in the sense of her own power and freedom from the necessity of dealing with them. There was little others could give her, and she desired less. But that sense of outer security was disturbed by the consciousness of division and weakness within. The Manchu rulership was tottering on its throne. It takes a long time for things to happen in China, and now we can say that it "was tottering." It continued to totter until it fell a century or more later—in 1911. To protect herself against that inevitable outcome China held aloof from entangling alliances even as America had done until she had entrenched herself upon the continent. When in the course of the half century of trade with the world China found foreign insistence too much to be denied, she chose the path that was least objectionable to her—that of delegating the trade to a few responsible merchants, and then abstaining from interference in the petty affairs of the "barbarians" themselves. If they wished to quarrel among themselves it was their lookout. The question of extra-territoriality, that scheme by which foreigners reserve to themselves the right to say what in their judgment is moral and just regardless of the standards of their adopted land—a sort of legalized anarchy—arose from this wish to separate herself as much as possible from contact with a world of people unpleasant and inimical to them. China wished to throw the responsibility for the evil doings of foreigners as much as possible upon the foreign chiefs representing them. This is not a bad pedagogical principle. It was perhaps best typified in the case of the *Doris* and the *Hunter* in the War of 1812, above referred to.

"The Chinese are a nation who invariably refuse to interfere or meddle with the laws or Government of any other country," wrote the American consul, Snow, to Madison on September 22,

1805, "and leave the control of all foreigners who may be among them, or within their ports (so long as they do not break or infringe upon their own laws and regulations), entirely to the direction of those who may have been empowered by their own Government to watch over them, or to the commanders of ships, who are under no such restrictions, to act in the disposal of their crews as in their opinions may seem best.

"A consul or agent, therefore, finds it impossible to enforce his demands by any legal process or aid in China; and is too frequently obliged to submit to the painful necessity of barely receiving an evasive refusal to his request, without any means whatever in his power to exact a compliance."

In other words, extra-territoriality was desired by the consuls and officials so that they might have some authority over their own nationals who, because China would not trouble about them so long as they broke no Chinese law, were able to defy their own laws and governors. Mainly this was the trouble with white sailors. Carrington of Providence says the same thing to Snow, and also to Madison, in discussing the question of impressment.

In due course graver matters pertaining to property rights, to religious propaganda arose to complicate the situation. But all right-thinking people agree that whatever the necessity of the case may demand, extra-territoriality is a gross injustice and transgression of international decency, and permits impositions that no civilization should permit its nationals to place upon a self-respecting and highly cultured people like the Chinese. Japan felt this so much that she bent heaven and earth to have these rights abrogated by treaty; but such is the weakness of human nature that Japan is enjoying similar "wrongs" in China to-day. Therefore no nation can truly claim to respect the integrity of China until it contributes all it can toward the eradication of this evil.

Yet it was not entirely from without that the downfall of China was brought about. Her suspicions of Western influence were in each case well founded. Even in the best the West had to offer—the teachings of Christianity, brought to China al-

truistically and in good faith—there seems to have been an element that attacked her like a disease and made for her disintegration. That individualistic and mystical religion conflicted at every point with a social order founded in reason and intense communal consciousness. It is perhaps no more fair to blame Christianity for the Taiping Rebellion than to blame Buddhism for the Boxer Uprising. Nevertheless, there was an obvious Christian influence in it.

## 4

The Taiping Rebellion, which broke out in 1843, scourged China as few nations have been scourged before or since. During the sixteen years of strife the population of China, says Putnam Weale, was reduced from 413,000,000 to 261,000,000; S. G. Cheng states more moderately that it laid ten provinces in ruin and killed 20,000,000 people. In any case, the havoc was inconceivably great, and not at all incomparable to the World War in 1914. Only a nation with China's staying qualities could have survived it.

The Taiping Rebellion was brought about by a fanatical Chinese, pretending to be seeking the overthrow of the Manchu Government on the grounds of a very doubtful conversion to Christianity. Hung-siu Tshuen had been unable four successive times to satisfy the educational authorities as to his learning. A consequent illness induced visions, and in these he conceived that he was the brother of Jesus Christ, and that God had assigned China to him as a kingdom. To authenticate his case, he threw a "spell" over an American Baptist missionary, Rev. Issachar J. Roberts, and became of the elect. China was ripe for dissension. Foreigners were profaning her sacred soil, upsetting her ancient traditions, and inculcating customs and creeds that were destroying those family relationships which for centuries had preserved the unity and the welfare of the people. A succession of emperors, each less able to guide the distraught people, and aliens in themselves, had given Hung-siu Tshuen ample justification for his doctrines. From a fana-

tical religious appeal, it did not take long, nor was it difficult, to break into the temporal folds with the cry of "Expel the Manchus!" Expel? Divide such an age-long merger one may, but to expel is another matter. The result was strife, inner conflict, terror, and prostration.

In the course of that struggle, when China had just reason to rue the day she ever permitted a single white man to set foot on her soil, there arose a pale face with a little black goatee, who somewhat mitigated her sorrows. Distraught, knowing not which way to turn, distrusting every foreigner as much as she despised every rebel, China would have collapsed in utter ruin and fallen wholly into the clutches of the foreign powers had it not been for young Frederick Townsend Ward of Salem, Massachusetts. Contemptuous of military men, China in her erudition had not yet learned that with some, might is the only art worth employing. Ward (whether merely as an adventurer or soldier of fortune, or whether actually inspired with a desire to help China hardly matters) threw himself into the organization of a small army of Chinese. Brief, spectacular, potent beyond all the dreams of the Chinese was the career of Ward. His "Ever Victorious Army" struck telling blows upon the rebels, and while Ward himself shortly after fell from a bullet, he had shattered the confidence of the rebels and had made possible the final routing they received at the hands of the British General, Gordon, ever after known as "Chinese" Gordon. Ward was buried with pomp and ceremony in a Confucian Temple at Sung Kiang, near Shanghai, and enshrined as a deity, where, ever since, the Chinese have burnt incense before his tomb. "By an edict of their Emperor the Chinese people are commanded for ever to worship and do reverence to the spirit of this foreign soldier who died ten thousand miles away from the New England seaport in which he was born and where his forefathers sleep." Ten thousand miles away from that very same seaport there lies another son of Salem, Ernest Fenollosa, in the quiet and hallowed precincts of Miidera temple, overlooking Lake Biwa in Japan. When Fenollosa died suddenly in

England, Japan sent a warship for his body. Every year the old priest offers a prayer before his grave. Thus the East, which has on the whole suffered so much and gained so little from the West, has known how to honour those who came to it unselfishly.

There were others who threw themselves whole-heartedly into the cause of China. Most of the Christian nations were in sympathy with the rebellion, entirely overestimating its Christian character. But the powers soon began to see that their advantage lay with the Imperial forces. It is not a little curious that the American commissioner in China, Humphrey Marshall, a Southerner who later returned to enter the Confederate Army, was influential in bringing the American Government and even other powers into the rebellion on the side of the throne. Thus one who was in favour of secession at home realized that China's salvation lay in union.

The rebellion was over. China was prostrate.

Marshall and Sir George Bonham, for reasons of mutual jealousy and personal dislike, had failed to agree as to the actions foreigners should take in the matter of the Rebellion. A hundred thousand lives were lost at Shanghai. The Laon-tai (Governor) was paying Marshall a visit in a matter pertaining to future action. "He was a small man, near fifty years of age (his moustache denoting a grandfather), his complexion was a pale, bloodless yellow, his eyes lively and piercing, and his rather contracted features expressed a keen, shrewd, and unscrupulous character," says Bayard Taylor. "He was formerly a *hong* merchant of Canton, and is still best known by his old name of Sam-qua. . . . He was dressed in robes of a rich, stiff silk, embroidered with the insignia of his office, and wore a cap with the single peacock's feather and opaque red button of a mandarin of the 3rd class. . . . On entering the room, they performed *kow-tow* by clasping their hands in front of their breasts, and bowing profoundly with a shaky motion, like those porcelain mandarins with which we are all familiar." Shortly afterward, this same Sam-qua slipped over the Shanghai wall in disguise, leaving no further trace in history.

## 5

With the aid of the foreign powers China had suppressed the insurrection, but there she was, panting from the great struggle, with all the eager aliens hoping to hear her end announced. Through the long centuries of isolation she had never learned the arts of diplomacy, and now she had none who could go out into the strange world and espouse her cause. Gordon, Ward, Marshall—they had indeed helped in their own way, just as Morrison, S. Wells Williams, and Peter Parker had done—the one group as militarist-diplomats, the other as missionaries. Where was there an idealist, a dreamer, a disinterested Marco Polo who could win for her her just place among the nations of the world?

In October, 1861, there arrived at Peking the new American Minister, Anson Burlingame. He remained at his post but a short time, resigned, and returned, and accepted the post again. In 1867, after four years of absence at home in the interim, he again resigned, and accepted the position as special envoy from China to the nations of Europe and America, to lay before them the plight of China. Such had been the confidence he had gained from the Chinese that with two Chinese associates and thirty assistants he was given *carte blanche* to act as he deemed wisest. By steam across the Pacific to California and thence in a spectacular progress from coast to coast, he carried the message of that humbled people to the people of this country. Thence to London, Paris, and Petrograd—always with due appreciation of the histrionic value of his part—this American in the capacity of a Chinese minister conveyed the willingness of China to learn from and coöperate with the nations she had once so proudly scorned.

"China," said Burlingame, "sees Russia on the north, Europe on the west, America on the east. She sees a cloud of sail on her coast, she sees the mighty steamers coming from everywhere—bow on. She sees the spark from the electric telegraph falling hot upon her everywhere. She arouses herself, not in anger, but for argument. . . . She finds that

she must come into relations with this civilization that is pressing up around her, and feeling that, she does not wait but comes out to you and extends to you her hand. She tells you she is ready to take upon her ancient civilization the graft of your civilization. She tells you she is ready to take back her own inventions, with all their developments."

Mencken remarks that there is in America no opportunity for the romance of character, the grand gesture, the tragic strut, so to speak, of the heroes of monarchical and feudal times. But surely these Americans who thus hurled themselves quixotically into the life of the Orient do not yield in purely pictorial qualities to the best attitudes of princelings. Ward, Burlingame, and Perry, the hero of our next chapter—these and others have shown that against the setting of the East even a democrat and a modern man without any advantages of title and costume may make on the stage of history a very handsome figure.

"Let her alone," pleaded Burlingame. "Let her have her independence; let her develop herself in her own time and in her own way. She has no hostility to you. Let her do this and she will initiate a movement which will be felt in every workshop of the civilized world. . . . Let her alone, and the caravans on the roads of the north, toward Russia, will swarm in larger numbers than ever before. Let her alone, and that silver which has been flowing for hundreds of years into China, losing itself like the lost rivers of the west, but which yet exist, will come out into the affairs of men. . . . The imagination kindles at the future which may be, and which will be, if you will be fair and just to China."

And so, after six hundred years during which Europe was crying, "Cathay! Cathay! Cathay!" the people that, since the first memory of man, had stood alone, self-sufficient and uniquely cultured, through all the rise and fall of civilizations, homogeneous and impregnable against the world—this people which had given so much to the world was reduced to beg for a place in the family of man. As in California, so in China, the dream of the Gold of Ophir was realized.

But attainment has always the taste of the Dead Sea Fruit.

Is this all that can come to any nation, that it builds to maturity the things which wake the envy of the world yet cannot gain the one thing precious to the full man—the right to live alone?

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## CHAPTER XVI

### THE COMMODORE AND THE TYCOON

HAVING wrested their covenants from the Son of Heaven and finding that full ten years had not in any way frayed them; seeing that the Celestial Empire was tottering to its fall and that chaos and madness had taken hold of the mightiest of Oriental realms; feeling that the discovery of gold in California had actually caused a new nation to sprout like Jack's beanstalk on the shores of the Pacific which soon must play neighbour with the East, America determined to tear away the last vestige of inhospitality from before the face of the yellow world.

Time and again men had made overtures to the people of Zipangu both for mercy and for trade. But the dauntless islanders turned a deaf ear to supplication, and a glittering sword to threat. The more China was opened, the more shut was Japan. The centuries had not diminished the dread which the missionaries, inadvertently abetted by the traders, had instilled into the hearts of the Japanese. The lack of native cupidity was hardly less amazing than the lack of curiosity. Natives who dared to go abroad met with death even more deliberate than the torture dealt to white waifs. Foreign sailors who were shipwrecked suffered as much as if their misfortune had been of their own plotting. When, as late as 1837, the pious firm of Olyphant & Company of New York dispatched the *Morrison* with Bibles and seven Japanese who had been blown to the Northwest coast and later carried to Canton, she was fired upon by the forts after her office had been made plain. The non-intercourse embargo upon going and coming was absolute, and the more the whaling interests drew Americans and Russians and British into Japanese waters, the more did the Japanese inflict punishments upon them as fair warning to the rest. Seventeen million dollars' worth of American interests as represented by

the whalers could not thus long remain exposed to penalty and scorn. When at last the steamer made its bow upon the Pacific the doom of Japanese exclusion was sealed.

From within, other forces were at work. The Dutch in their narrow privileges had faced obloquy for centuries in the doubtful joy of a communion with Japan. Through them the outer world was kept fresh to the inner. Then one day some Japanese fishermen picked up a lone Alastor in an open boat, whom they brought back to their crude thatched huts for safe-keeping. Fear of discovery finally drove them to surrender the young man to the officials, and then it was learned that Ronald McDonald, born in Astoria, Oregon, and only in his twenties, had purposely had himself set adrift from a whaler for the precarious adventure of learning the customs, language, and conditions of the Japanese. Of course, he was, as was their wont, dumped upon the rear steps of the empire at Nagasaki, where he remained a prisoner-at-large and a teacher of English—an ambassador without credentials.

At last, after years of incessant demand for the forceful opening of Japan, the Government at Washington finally decided to dispatch a squadron thither under the command of Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry.

Perry's equipment for the mission was not without its picturesque elements, though he was a man-o'-war's man. He had, according to his published report, romantic notions of the delightful life in China of which "we have been accustomed to read, and pictures of which served to amuse us in our childhood." Nor was he without vision of the effects of the undertaking. Evidently imbued with the spirit of Jefferson as regards our place in the Pacific, he also foresaw a time when a great many American settlements would obtain in the East that "would be offshoots from us rather than, strictly speaking, colonies." Perry was, however, a true expansionist, though he tries here and there to rationalize his imperialistic ambitions. Enlarging upon the dreams of Marco Polo and of Columbus, Perry conceives of himself as the last executor of Columbus, who, taking "the end of the thread which, on the shores of

America, broke in the hands of Columbus, and fastening it again at the ball of destiny, has rolled it onward until, as it has unwound itself, it has led the native and civilized inhabitants of the land discovered by the great Genoese to plant their feet on the far-distant region of his search, and thus fulfilled his wish to bring Zipangu within the influence of European civilization."

And so Commodore Perry tripped merrily along to the East, making a show of power to the Chinese, partaking sumptuously and with expense ruled out by the hospitable Russell & Co. of a sociability the like of which parsimonious compatriots at home could ill afford, distributing "five tons of Chinese 'cash'" among the Lew Chew Islanders, which people he plans, in the event of failure in Japan, to swallow on his return, tossing about new names for Japanese islands which belonged to them long before his predecessor, Columbus, even thought of Zipangu—"American Anchorage," "Susquehanna Bay," "Perry Island," as any generous godfather might do—and making himself invisible as if he were a Perseus or a Jason about to strike at the Gorgon's head or to batter the palace of an Aetes.

There were good omens, too, that foretold his fortune. Among the special contributions to Perry's records (most of them were carefully digested before submission to demos) was that of a native of China, who advises us as follows: "Next day, having prayed and sought for help and teaching, as I stood upon the steamer's deck, I looked up, and was struck by the appearance of clouds in the south and northern quarters of the heavens. In the south they assumed the form of a winged lion, springing up to the zenith, while those in the north were low and broken, like a slaughtered army. A few cloudlets seemed to have floated away from them toward the south, till they were arrested by the lion's breath, whose figure, moreover, continued to dilate, while the clouds in the north gradually disappeared altogether. After looking at these appearances, I said to my friend, 'The heavens prognosticate that our expedition will finally be successful, but difficulties will have to be overcome in the first place.'"

How inconsiderate of the elements not to specify these dif-

ficulties. There was one other on board to whom premonitions were likewise disconcerting. This one was a Japanese, one who had been adrift on the seas, rescued, and brought to China. His slight knowledge of English made him of service. But his fears for his life upon breathing "This is my own, my native land" overruled all assurances that so long as he was on an American ship his life was safe, and he earned for himself the nickname Sam Patch because he was for ever wailing the Japanese word *shimpai*, meaning trouble and anxiety.

Not so the Commodore. "Indeed, in conducting all my business with these very sagacious and deceitful people," he tells us, "I have found it profitable to bring to my aid the experience gained in former and by no means limited intercourse with the inhabitants of strange lands, civilized and barbarian; and this experience has admonished me that, with people of forms, it is necessary either to set all ceremony aside, or to out-Herod Herod in assumed personal consequence and ostentation." Nevertheless, he seems to have considered it just as profitable to assure his own countrymen, upon his return to America, that it was all in play, merely for the sake of making a great impression upon the Japanese, and not because within his own heart there was the least desire for pomp and display. It worked. On his first visit to Japan in 1853, Perry had gained so much that neither threat nor persuasion could bring him into conference with any but the most exalted representative of the Empire, nor cause him to swerve from his intention of being received within the sound of Yedo's booming temple bells. Having gained so much on his first visit, on his second, owing to a more hurried return than he had planned, and finding himself in their waters in February when weather conditions were more precarious, he not only would not go to Nagasaki, where the Japanese wished him to go, but he even refused his previous meeting place—Uraga—and demanded a more secure harbourage off Yokohama and within sight of the Tycoon's capital. All the while he kept himself as sacred within his own cabin as the Emperor was within his palace, and only when every possible proof was provided to show that real officials

had come down to receive the letter he bore from the President, encased in a box of gold worth a thousand dollars, would he deign to emerge.

We are not concerned with the diplomatic elements of his success. Unfortunately for Perry, however, he had failed actually to gain the ear of the Emperor direct, for at that time the Shogun, or generalissimo of the forces of the land, was still in power, while the Emperor lived in seclusion in Kyoto. In order to impress the foreigners, the Shogun had assumed the title Tycoon (always used in dealing with "barbarians") and convinced Perry that he was a sort of Emperor. How little they knew of the political structure of the land as it then obtained is indicated by the feeling among the officers that Matsusaki, a fifth and equivocal member of the Japanese commission, "for aught they knew, might have been the Emperor himself, though it is most unlikely; and if he were, all that can be said is that he was much less polished and agreeable than his prince commissioners." This, notwithstanding that they had been advised of the death of the Emperor in the interim of their two visits, and that the new Emperor was only a boy of fifteen. Yet Perry believed that he had actually negotiated a treaty with the Emperor through his ministers.

## 2

It is almost impossible for us to conceive the effect of the coming of the "black squadron" upon the minds of the Japanese. In Perry's account we see only the attitudes of the diplomats, each striving to make the most favourable impression upon the other. For nearly three centuries the Japanese had been taught to fear foreigners, and that fear was kept fresh by unmerciful punishment from the officials. Can we then possibly understand the effect of a sudden appearance upon the harbour waters of four enormous ships, snorting, smoking, and belching forth fury, and then coming to anchor under the very noses of officialdom which had never missed a chance of assuring the people that in them and them alone lay safety?

"The whole city was in an uproar," says Inazo Nitobe, in

one of the exceedingly few spurts of confidence in matters pertaining to the Japanese reaction to the visit. "In all directions were seen mothers flying with children in their arms and men with mothers on their backs. Rumours of an immediate action, exaggerated each time they were communicated from mouth to mouth, added horror to the horror-stricken. The tramp of war horses, the clatter of armed warriors, the noise of carts, the parade of firemen, the incessant tolling of bells, the shrieks of women, the cries of children, dinning all the streets of a city of more than a million souls, made confusion worse confounded."

Confusion indeed, if mothers were driven to take their children in their arms, instead of on their backs, but not quite so unusual for firemen to parade. It must be remembered, however, that Perry was only a lad when the people on the Hudson River rushed frantically pell-mell at the sight of Fulton's first steam vessel. Nevertheless, he was now wise enough and proud enough to exploit the fears of the Japanese to his advantage. Not only had he presents for the Emperor consisting of a small railroad engine and a telegraph outfit with which to ensnare their interest, guns with which to terrify, wind instruments with which to beguile them (and at the distant strains of which one dignified Japanese official could never restrain his legs), but when at last Perry thought the psychological time had come for him to show himself, and he was rowed across to the temporary buildings which had been erected for the conference, he led the military procession with a bodyguard of two of the largest Negroes he could find in all America, one on each side of him. No wonder the Japanese officials threw all composure to the winds, and, rushing dispatches to the court of the Shogun and mustering all their forces, called upon the priests to implore favour of the gods. Thus, "in opposition to the Japanese laws," as their own official documents declare, the tottering shogunate received the American Ambassador on its shores.

It was a hard thing for these recluse people to accept. Even to-day, notwithstanding the general expressions of satisfaction

and gratification which Japanese permit themselves, Inazo Nitobe, possibly one of their most gifted writers in English, cannot give Perry full credit for diplomatic shrewdness and speaks of his unyielding demand for a reception near Tokyo, instead of at Nagasaki, as having "expressed a desire" and "after some hesitation" they "mutually agreed upon a suitable site." Yes, every time the Japanese suggested Nagasaki Perry moved his ships farther on toward Yedo; when they urged Uruga again, Perry steered for Yedo; when they offered Kamakura as an alternative, Perry pushed on to Yedo. Finally, in order to prevent his actually casting anchor within sight of the palace, the Japanese accepted Yokohama, which Perry, after survey and sounding, considered about as good a place as any, and the negotiations proceeded. Without doubt, if Perry had wished, he could have gone to the capital. We say this without any false pride. The Japanese were as clever and as sagacious in their own way as were the Americans. They succeeded in keeping Perry innocent of the internal disintegration that was going on, and to which alone Perry really owes his easy success, for had it not been that the shogunate was crumbling to its decay and the Imperial forces were hardly born, Perry would not have accomplished *peacefully* that which he was after.

## 3

The conference was conducted with a dignity that was alternately the embodiment of austerity and the incarnation of moonshine. As commissioners, we see them employing their wits to gain or to deny concessions such as whether shipwrecked sailors were to be treated as pirates before they were found guilty, whether they should be sent to Nagasaki or harboured elsewhere, or whether there should be two or three ports opened.

The next moment we see them straddling the tiny railroad engine and being whirled around with innocent abandon. The car could not carry a child of six, but the Japanese, "unable to reduce themselves to the capacity of the inside of the carriage

. . . betook themselves to the roof. It was a spectacle not a little ludicrous to behold a dignified mandarin whirling around the circular road at the rate of twenty miles an hour, with his loose robes flying in the wind. As he clung with a desperate hold to the edge of the roof, grinning with intense interest, and his huddled body shook convulsively with a kind of laughing timidity, while the car spun rapidly round the circle, you might have supposed the movement, somehow or other, was dependent rather upon the enormous exertions of the uneasy mandarin than upon the power of the little puffing locomotive, which was so easily performing its work."

It would be illuminating, indeed, if in the case of the Japanese, we could see ourselves as they then saw us. Obviously Perry took himself seriously, yet it is inconceivable that he did not at the same time enjoy many a merry moment during the whole procedure. He was making history, but now and then he must have retired into his sacred cabin and enjoyed a full and complete laugh. None but a good actor would have thought of a Nubian guard; nor would any but the shrewdest diplomat have permitted to be conveyed to the Japanese the indirect suggestion that "if the Japanese came to the United States they would find the navigable waters of the country free to them, and that they would not be debarred even from the rich goldfields of California."

Withal, the entire proceedings were marked with a decorum and a kindness that place them in the forefront of all international conferences. There has been nothing like it in history. Here was a nation violently averse to intercourse with the world, belligerent in disposition, self-sufficient, deceitful and yet naïve, passionate yet sad, humble though burdened with overweening self-conceit, murderous though fond of children—being deftly and surely curbed and defeated in their very defiance. Their internal disharmony was not alone responsible for their submission. Their better natures were indeed won over by the firmness and the reasonableness of that knocker at the gate. They submitted, and in their yielding gained their empire and rose to command the respect of the world. An

island recluse rising to supremacy at a time when India and China and a world of oppressed nations—not forgetting the two black brothers of slaves that bore guard to the Commodore—stood as mute messengers of alarm to that harmless people. Certainly the Perry Expedition, with all its innocent pretense, must ever remain one of the most spectacular episodes in American political history. True that it was ridiculed at home. “The funeral of Bill Poole or the fillibustering operations in the Gulf of Mexico,” said E. E. Hale, “have (naturally) awakened more interest among the people than has the opening, by peaceful diplomacy, of the Italy of the East to the intercourse of the world.” But was not Jefferson’s Louisiana Purchase ridiculed, and the purchase of Alaska referred to as “Seward’s Folly” and “Walrussia”? And it will be well for this nation if posterity finds no more injustice, misuse of power, and misplaced pomp in all its other doings, done and to be done, than entered into the opening of Japan to the world.

## 4

In reflecting upon the effects of Perry’s Expedition, it is well to bear in mind certain tendencies and possibilities inherent in the movement that precipitated it. In the nature of things, after America’s acquisition of California and Oregon, we were the natural agencies for the opening of Japan. But that very situation made it more and more imperative for Great Britain and Russia to secure their own positions if they were to pre-dominate in that ocean. Both of these countries were making preparations for a similar mission. In fact, the danger of their doing so caused Perry to return to Japan in winter rather than wait for spring as he had declared he would to the Japanese. Had Russia or Britain opened Japan by force (and they were inclined at the same time to be more belligerent and more yielding than Perry was) it is not unlikely that in her weakened condition internally Japan might have had to surrender her sovereignty or make concessions that would greatly have impaired her vitality and her future. As it is, America is indeed responsible for the creation in the Far East of a power that is

more than able to challenge Occidental aggression upon the Orient. This may yet cost humanity dearly, but it is after all only just that Japan should have her fling, her position, regardless of possible consequences, and Japan has at least shown herself the peer of those who thought themselves her betters, even if there is revealed now and then a cloven hoof within the *tabi*.

American diplomacy in Japan set a new precedent for the world, though it has not been imitated as much as it might. As the squadron steamed out of the bay, Dr. S. Wells Williams, the missionary-interpreter, wrote in his diary: "God grant that in opening their country to the West we may not be bringing upon them misery and ruin." In the days that followed Perry's success there occurred enough within Japan to have warranted the usual presumptions on the part of the powers of misrule and mismanagement to justify conquest. During the next ten years alone, prior to the restoration of the Emperor to power, more crimes of a nature to create international complications occurred in Japan than had occurred in the full century of relations with China. Murders, assassinations, attacks upon vessels in the harbours culminating in drastic punishments and costly indemnities, were frequent, and only the cautious reasonableness of the American precedent assured fair dealing. The Japanese turned to converting temple and monastery bells into cannon and bombs and sprinkled forts over every promontory. But, to the credit of Japan, it must also be added that every institution for improvement of industry and intellect sprouted even as the introduction of exotic plants and animals spread like wildfire in the empty, barren soil of Australasia. Not even disaster, an earthquake as terrible as that of 1923, which occurred soon after the opening of the country, deterred these people who for two and a half centuries had been starved mentally, spiritually, and mechanically. That an anti-foreign movement called the *Jo-i* party should have arisen is only natural, and bespeaks rather the healthful condition of the country than its decay. That Japan had not been altogether inert in mind is shown us in a very

interesting manner. The Chinese whose augury for a successful issue to the expedition we noted at the beginning of this chapter, being a man of learning, found it possible, by means of the Chinese characters which the Japanese had borrowed centuries before, to communicate with the Japanese, though their languages have no relation to each other whatever. He lent a learned Japanese, oddly named Ping-san-heen-urh-lang (doubtless a Chinese interpretation of a Japanese name) some of his books and writings, and received along with the return of the books some opinions of the Japanese worth quoting.

“As I have shut up your volumes,” wrote the Japanese, “my feelings have found vent in sighs. The common people are oppressed and miserable, and the rulers pay no attention to their feelings. They who should be the pastors of the nation fail to discharge their duties; bribery and venality widely prevail; such it seems is the condition of China, from antiquity to the present time—the common diseases of a decaying empire. The essential evil of such a state may be described in a single phrase—it is the desire of gain. Now, the desire of gain is common to all men, and is the pregnant womb of all evil. Confucius seldom spoke of gain, wishing to check the lust of it in its source. This, also, was the reason why my ancestors cut off all intercourse of foreign nations with Japan, because the desire of gain led astray the ignorant people, and wonderful arts in the investigation of principles deceived the perverse, so that they got stringing together, seeking gain and hurrying after what was wonderful, till filial duty, modesty, and the sense of shame were all forgotten. To a man who has reached this stage of evil, neither his father nor his sovereign is anything.”

And so we find a Japanese quoting Confucius to a Chinese, reëchoing Christian virtues in the face of a Christian squadron. Thus indeed does life fling back into our faces our own vices and our own pretensions, also; and after centuries of insatiable search for gain, its good and its evil results come ringing back into our ears just as a note sung into an inert piano will come floating out of those depths like a voice from another world,

In the interchange of verses so customary among Orientals, that Japanese poet wrote to this Chinese poet:

Say not our meeting here was all of chance;  
To you we owe the treaty and our peace.  
From far the strangers came, their language strange,  
'Twas well we had your pencil and your tongue.

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## CHAPTER XVII

### INTELLECTUAL FERMENT

He sees clearly who sees from afar;  
Hazily he who participates.—LAO TZE.

NO GREAT culture can long survive without a wholesome curiosity. That inquisitiveness kept the nation moving east by west for seventy years until the continent was won from sea to sea. Those who were willing to cast from their thinking the intellectual swaddling clothes of Europe turned to the Orient as eagerly for new interpretations of their new life as the merchants and the traders had turned for material comforts. But to give America a literature and a culture of its own, adjustment had to be made between the antagonistic forces—protestantism and atheism, aristocracy and democracy, landlordism and industrialism. It was not until the United States had held together for nearly half a century that there was even the beginning of a worthy American literature, and only two outstanding political perceptions as the concrete manifestation of our nationality. These two were the Monroe Doctrine, which barred Europe for ever from anti-democratic ambitions here, and the vague and undefined policy toward China which also implied that Europe must keep hands off.

Politically, economically, intellectually the country was carrying on a tremendous tug of war. Some were looking for their inspiration to Europe; others to Asia. The real American was just being born. America had as yet no voice, no one to assess its psychic possibilities. As late as 1837, Emerson declared that the time had not yet come "when the sluggish intellect of this continent will look from under its iron lids, and fill the postponed expectation of the world with something better than the exertions of mechanical skill. Our day of de-

pendence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close."

And yet, while Americans were looking to Europe for their patterns, Europe was looking expectantly to America. This burgeoning of life in the wilderness upon an altogether new and untried plane aroused the dreamers and poets with hope for the emancipation of the race. Coleridge and Southey placed their ideal colony on the banks of the Susquehanna; Shelley, William Godwin, and William Blake, atheists, freethinkers, anarchists, were echoing the clamour of Thomas Paine for the Rights of Man. William Blake's poem "America" had aroused apprehensions in England not unlike the fears of Bolshevism in America. One critic of the poem said: "In 'America' the conflict between England and her colonies is interpreted as presaging the imminent annihilation of authority and re-establishing the Blakean Licence. On the side of law stands Urisen, the aged source of all restrictive codes, his ministers are the king . . . and the priests of England. On the opposite side stands Orc, the fiery demon of living passion and desire, the arch-rebel, 'anti-Christ', hater of Dignities, Lover of wild rebellion, and Transgressor of God's Law."

One is somewhat amused by this note of terror. Certainly nowhere in the slender American literature of the time can one detect any such rampancy. In the actual conditions of life there was indeed a loosening of social ties, but anarchy, in the sense of lawlessness and violence, is a city product, not that of the wilderness. And Americans were simply reverting to the vigorous violence of the pioneer, rebelling against the narrow violence of the Puritan. Both primitive in their rudimentary simplicity, they were merely balancing each other, waiting for some softer influences to enter and lubricate the friction between them. One is tempted to wish that the contact with the East had had in it more of benign lubricity—that it had meant to us what the crusades meant to Europe.

The crusaders never returned as Europeans. They were a new people, new as Americans are compared with Europeans. What would have happened if Prince Ito of Japan had become

imbued with American democracy instead of German imperialism, and had returned with some such compromise constitution in our direction, instead of the bureaucratic system he instituted? What would have happened if, when the first Americans struck China as the Gauls, their ancestors, had struck Rome, there had been the same counter-missionary influence emanating from the older civilization? As Rome crumbled under the onslaughts of the barbarians, cultivated Romans, converted to Christianity, started out in all directions through the northern forests carrying the seeds of culture which at that moment were being apparently destroyed. Some such seeds came to us from the East, but sporadically and by chance. The East is lethargic, the West restless, and so far the effects of the West on the East are more obvious; but restlessness can yet be soothed into quiet. We hardly know yet whether, having set out to conquer Asia, we have not been conquered by it.

## 2

When America first began to move out into the world, the finest influences in thought and culture came to us from the East. From over the seven seas men were bringing the mellowed fruits of the most ancient civilizations to check the harsh tendencies of reversion to primitive life. Puritanism had taken the Bible so literally that it was treading the tender shoots of a new culture back into the sod. Even with the continent to spread out in, beauty of thought and feeling would not have emerged for generations had there not been a goal and an outlet in the China trade. Many diverse tendencies had to be justified one with the other before America could fall into the stride that was her own peculiar rhythm.

To find distinct Oriental influences in American culture, raw as it still is, is like listening for the lost chord in the music of the spheres. We do not know that we have found it, but we are sure that it is there. We have not tried to exhaust the whole of American thought in order to see how much of it came from the East directly through the China and India trade. What we here present is only our faith that, since we have unearthed

so much, there must be much more there. One reads to satiety about the menace and the challenge of Asia, of the rising tide of colour and the white man's burden. One sees the Nordic, with his alleged love of free and orderly government rooted in codes, rise up as the restless, bold, intrepid, defiant pioneer, yielding to no man or tyrant or convention. The blood that is thicker than water one sees boiling with internecine strife. Perhaps, after all, it is culture, not blood and race, that matters. We have heard of the Westernization of Asia, but it is more to our purpose to look within and see to what extent Asia has Orientalized us. For one may see in America Oriental facets that shine as brilliantly as though native here.

Whatever the outer influences may have been, even the most casual inquiry into American literature reveals distinctions in quality and substance. The American spirit is not New England, nor was New England purely English. There is a clear-cut line of demarcation between the literature that came to us from the Boston school and that from the New York area. The New England writer is local, he is spiral; the writers from New York State are continental. For the moment we have only to mention Melville and Whitman in contrast with Hawthorne and Longfellow.

The Puritan could not be continental in his outlook because he did not come from the continent, nor did he look out across the continent: he came from the sea and to the sea he went. When, late in the 18th Century, a Southern gentleman thought to make sport of the New Englanders because they eschewed husbandry and set out upon the seas in tiny craft, Josiah Quincy retorted, "New Englanders would rather see a boat-hook than all the sheep crooks in the world. . . . Concerning the land, of which the gentleman from Virginia and the one from North Carolina think so much, they think very little. It is, in fact, to them only a shelter from the storm, a perch on which they build their eyrie and hide their young, while they skim the surface and hunt in the deep."

In that remark we get the whole spirit of early New England. That is why Boston, New London, New Bedford, Nantucket,

turned their backs on the route around the Cape of Good Hope and struck down right into the face of the Horn. New York and Philadelphia, with the manner of the gentleman, took to the Indies. In the former we see the recrudescence of Viking life—Viking not in that vague sense in which the term is generally used to represent the poetry of a few barbarous sailors and robbers of the 9th Century, who, as a matter of fact, seldom sailed very far or had the wit to rob very much—but quite literally. For Viking means only a sailor or pirate, and was applied to those settlers among the cold promontories and fjords of northern Europe who, like the first New Englanders, cultivated the sea for lack of land to cultivate, and robbed agricultural and industrial communities of what they themselves could not create.

Puritanism from the first had drawn its chief adherents from this Viking element, from the imperfectly Christianized Scandinavian stocks which had come over from Denmark and Norway to the more inviting meadows of England, and then reverted to their maritime life. With such antecedent characteristics it was not long before that harsh Viking spirit, with its plain ways and plain speech, its faith in the self-sufficiency of the individual man, rebelled against, not only the corruption, but also the tenderness, the beauty, and the aristocratic gradations of mediæval Christianity.

Puritanism, when it shifted from England to America, selected quite naturally a settlement peculiarly fitting to its Viking character, for these colonies, to which men came to worship Thor and Woden under the name of the Hebrew Jehovah, were planned as fishing colonies and attracted the sea-faring folk of England. Hence, through that stringent selection of the sea, reinforced by personal character and geography, there appeared in New England a quintessence of the Viking blood—not English, for in England there were many strains of which this was only one, but a distinct and peculiar people, separated from the first from among the whole mass of Colonial Americans, as contemporary testimony shows. Hector St. John Crèvecoeur, in his "Letters of an American

Farmer," makes this distinction between the New Englander and the general American. There they earned their bread without sharing in the ordinary American development, lived in neighbourly and family life in a not very different manner from the Vikings of the 9th Century.

One may look in vain among the gay gentlemen of Shakespeare for anything that resembles New England character, though the first Puritans were his contemporaries. But when we turn to the Icelandic sagas, to the unadorned prose stories which anticipated by many centuries the realistic novel, we find the very accent and gesture of New England life, disguised indeed by a hundred external variations, but remarkably unaltered in social and personal character. The bleak downright moral code, the lust for action and for practical results, the shrewdness, the loyalty and tenacity, the spare expressions of affection, the fire of life so resolutely suppressed that it shows only as sparks from flint, the absence of grace and tenderness and softness and every decoration—one finds the same personalities in this day from Maine to Connecticut; the same kind of rascals as Nord, the same kind of good men as Njal. And the soul of this early New England is to be found, not in Longfellow or Whittier, but in the old Viking's song.

#### THE VIKING'S SONG

*(Eighth or Ninth Century, perhaps older)*

I can sing of myself a true song, of voyages telling  
How oft through laborious days, through the wearisome hours,  
I have suffered; have borne tribulations; explored in my ship  
Mid the terrible rolling of waves, habitations of sorrow.  
Benumbed by the cold, oft the comfortless night watch has held me  
At the prow of my craft as it tossed about under the cliffs.  
My feet were imprisoned with frost, were fettered with ice-chains,  
Yet hotly were wailing the querulous sighs round my heart;  
And hunger within, sea-wearied, made havoc of courage.  
This he, whose lot happily chances on land, does not know:  
Nor how I, on the ice-bound sea, passed the winter in exile,  
In wretchedness, robbed of my kinsmen, with icicles hung.  
The hail flew in showers about me, and there I heard only  
The roar of the sea, ice-cold waves, and the song of the swan.  
For pastime the gannets' cries served me, the kittiwakes' chatter  
For laughter of men, and for mead-drink the call of the sea-mews.  
When storms on the rocky cliffs beat, then the terns, icy-feathered,

Made answer. Full oft the sea-eagle forebodingly screamed,  
The eagle with pinions wave-wet. There none of my kinsmen  
Might gladden my desolate soul; of this little he knows  
Who possesses the pleasures of life, who has felt in the city  
Some hardship, some trifling adversity, proud and wine-flushed.  
How weary I oft had to tarry upon the sea-way:  
The nights became darker, it snowed from the north;  
The world was enchained by frost; hail fell upon earth;  
'Twas the coldest of grain. Yet the thoughts of my heart are now throbbing  
To test the high streams, the salt waves in tumultuous play.  
Desire in my heart ever urges my spirit to wander,  
To seek out the home of the stranger in lands afar off.  
There is no one that dwells upon earth, so exalted in mind,  
So large in his bounty, nor yet of such vigorous youth,  
Nor so daring in deeds, to whom his liege lord is so kind,  
But that he has always a longing, a sea-faring passion  
For what the Lord God shall bestow, be it honour or death.  
No heart for harp hath he, nor for acceptance of treasure,  
No pleasure has he in a wife, no delight in the world,  
Nor in aught save the roll of the billows; but always a longing,  
A yearning uneasiness, hastens him on to the sea.  
The woodlands are captured by blossoms, the hamlets grow fair,  
Broad meadows are beautiful, earth again bursts into life,  
And all stir the heart of the wanderer eager to journey,  
So he meditates going afar in the pathway of tides.  
The cuckoo, moreover, gives warning with sorrowful note,  
Summer's harbinger sings, and forebodes to the heart bitter sorrow,  
The nobleman comprehends not, the luxurious man,  
What some must endure, who travel the farthest in exile.  
Now my spirit uneasily turns in the heart's narrow chamber,  
Now wanders forth over the tide, o'er the home of the whale,  
To the ends of the earth—and comes back to me, eager and greedy,  
The lone wanderer screams, and resistlessly drives my soul onward,  
Over the whale path, over the tracts of the sea.

All through the story of our sea-faring life in the last century and before, there move characters that remind one of these historic Vikings. When the old whaler of New London rebuked wasteful sons or frivolous daughters by threatening that if they did not mend their ways their poor old father would have to shake out his sails and take to the sea again, he was speaking in terms that had been used centuries ago in Europe, but have been long forgotten.

It is difficult to say why this word "Viking," applied as it was at first to what was, compared with the present, but a limited and unadventurous sea-faring, so charms the imagination. But if the appeal is there surely it belongs in the greatest mea-

sure to the last great flare of this sailing energy, which, in the American clipper, did actually realize those pristine Viking qualities. Huddling in little groups in well-nigh incestuous intimacy, upon the low-lying shores of New England, deprived of every source of revenue or vent but that of the deep, men emerged upon the gray seas, wistfulness in their eyes, their hearts heavy, sustained in their hazardous vocations only by a violent and incorrigible faith in their one Book. Had they found ample sustenance on these scraggy shores, their contribution to the literature of America might have been different. Some turned pirate and corsair, but the days of piracy were over. Two Oriental influences had come into their lives: first the Bible and then the Indies. One can understand more easily the passionate adherence to the Word in the light of the bleak life about them. It is easy enough now, with a great rich world of literature to choose from, to be cosmopolitan in one's tastes, but what other single volume could then have offered a destitute people so much passion and emotion in such compact form? Poetry, love, history, morality, every human requisite was to be found in it. Read the sermon of Father Maple in Melville's "Moby Dick," and then historic Puritanism takes on a totally different colour.

## 3

And yet, no one can long feed upon such realism as that without in turn becoming a-hungred for beauty and for art. With such a grounding and with the external vision of the softness, the tenderness, the beauty of the East to look upon, it is little wonder that Puritanism could not survive a quarter century of that benign influence. If by the lifting of an anchor a New England lad was able to leave behind him all the organized gloom of which Hawthorne spoke so bitterly, to be carried out into the rolling sea, up to the frozen North, or away to the lax and luscious East—however heavy his ballast of conscience, it was an escape from the littleness which passed for life on land. Throughout the unpublished letters of the time one runs across records of this brooding melancholy, this desire to "remove from the world of disappointment." And so we

find Puritanism slowly crumbling before the disintegrating sunlight of the East. Not only did these sea captains and merchant-shipowners bring back with them the silks and spices of Cathay, but they introduced a gaiety of life that gave colour and comfort to the otherwise chill atmosphere of Puritan existence.

In Puritan New England the more subtle influences of silks and ebony were, logically enough, feared fully as much as the stage and strange doctrine. A Sanskrit Bible may be disputed, or even if it is secretly made an appendix to the decalogue, is privately revered and not too loudly advertised. But the carnelian necklaces, shawls, and crêpes which our ladies wear, these we admire as part of the beauty we adore; we take them into our very souls; and though we may not in the end know where they came from and what they there symbolized, we take by that much the life and nature of their makers into our hearts and cultures. And it was in that way more than in the direct absorption of Oriental philosophies that our impulse to a new and more vital literature was first born.

Eighteenth-century taste, in dress and domestic decoration, was greatly influenced by China—even before the Americans took the China trade into their own hands. The Metropolitan Museum of Art tells us that the wall papers used in the 18th Century were either of Chinese origin or were painted in England after the Chinese patterns. John Hancock's uncle had some placed in his mansion, but not without a slight improvement or two. "If they can make it more beautiful by adding more birds flying here and there, with some landskips at the bottom, should like it well," he wrote. To-day there is a great revival in the interest in such wall papers. We think we are creating new varieties; yet in centuries to come is it far-fetched to fancy that we will be more Chinese than the Chinese, or the Japanese more American than ourselves? That cultural metamorphosis went on in New England, when, after two or three decades of vicarious contact with the East, men turned to rearing mansions for themselves wherein the arts were slowly gaining influence, and in which the religions, philosophies, and

domestic predilections of the Far East were discussed and unconsciously absorbed.

The stimulus to domestic architecture was one of the first notable effects of the increase in wealth that was dragged up hither from the other rim of the Pacific, and two of the most notable architects of the day were intimately connected with the East Indian commerce. Charles Bulfinch of Boston was one of the earliest adventurers in the trade. Samuel McIntyre of Salem turned readily from decorating a merchant's house to carving a figurehead for a ship, or fashioning those Hindu manikins which may yet be seen in the Peabody Museum of Salem. Here and there, as at Provincetown and Mystic, one will find octagonal houses that were without doubt built in heretical imitation of Chinese pagodas. Most of the household furnishings came directly from China, and even many of those that arrived as English products still had an Oriental air about them, such as Spode China which was carried by American ships from England to Canton to be decorated, and then home to Boston.

The intellectual influences are possibly less definite but more potent. Nearly seventy years after Henry Cabot Lodge had played as a boy on his father's pier amidst the cargoes that came direct from China, long after such a definite thing as the China trade was forgotten, he rose in the Senate to defend China in the Shantung issue with an ardour that could not but have been the result of that romantic experience of early adolescence. Barrett Wendell in his "Literary History of America" unconsciously implies that though New Englanders for two hundred years or more had been living the comparatively settled life that might normally breed literature, it was not until they began to go out to China and the East Indies that any intellectual life awakened in them. Between the old Boston of the 18th Century and the Boston of the 19th Century—the Boston of the Puritan fathers and the Revolutionary radicals, and the Boston of the Temperance Reform, the Transcendental Movement, Foreign Missions, the Lyceum, and the *North American Review*—the Boston of Emerson and Holmes and Longfellow

—there was a period of evolution to which the Far East contributed not a little. The ships brought news; they brought ideas; they aroused discussion which one may still find interspersed among local items in the newspapers of the period. A new generation of children was being born and reared in a new world of ideas—a race possessed with something the Boston of Colonial days had never been troubled with: a passion for thinking. “From 1790 to 1820,” said Emerson, “there was not a book, a speech, a conversation or a thought in the State.” Nor any art or music either, and only a struggling theatre. One artist of merit who had been born in Boston, Copley, had gone to London, and later earned his living painting the portraits of the merchant princes who would not let him forget their busy wharves and majestic ships which must needs be put boldly into the background.

Slowly Boston began to be conscious of a cosmic existence. “The heart of the world beats under the three hills of Boston,” said Holmes, in whom, however, but little of that world-consciousness can be found. Marvin observes that, of two sons in any family, one of whom went West and one of whom went to China, within a decade or two the China merchant was the cultivated gentleman with suave manners and social prestige, whereas the pioneer had acquired the habits of the peasant. Jonathan Goodhue, who at fifteen entered the counting-house of a Salem East India merchant and later became a notable merchant himself, wrote in his old age for the benefit of his family: “I ought to account it another circumstance of thankfulness, that I had the advantage, in early life, of imbibing and cultivating sentiments of perfect toleration and charity for the religious opinions of others. . . . At an early period of my life I was thrown, for several months, exclusively into the society of Mohammedans, and Brahmins, and there were many among them with whom a mutual regard subsisted.”

## 4

This awakening of intellectual curiosity, following close upon the heels of more stabilized economic life rooted in the Far

East, began, of its own accord, to drive otherwise self-sufficient New England into expansion by migration and by missionaries. With the return of men like William Sturgis, who had spent whole nights with Northwest Indian chiefs discussing religion, philosophy, and morals, it was natural for the more generous hearted to consider ways and means of establishing good relations with remote places, and learning, like Odysseus, of their manners and morals. The Salem East India Society, one of the most valuable commercial and scientific societies, had petitioned Congress for an expedition to be fitted out to make a voyage of discovery and survey of the South Seas. "We know of no class of merchants in the world more deserving of public encouragement than those of Salem," said the Senator-merchant, Silsbee, "whose enterprise is as unbounded as the expanse of the globe." This expedition was to search for stranded sailors, wrecks, and rocks in the far Pacific. Scientific exploration, in our democracy, had to be furthered under the guise of fostering commerce, or under the religious enthusiasm of the missionary movement. Jefferson, with his keen mind and interest in science, had hoped for a chance to employ his powers as executive in the furtherance of geographical knowledge, but the country as a whole was not yet ripe for it. In 1793 he had encouraged Michaux "to find the shortest and most convenient route of communication between the United States and the Pacific Ocean." And when urging Congress to undertake such an expedition twenty years later, he said:

"While other nations have encountered great expense to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge, by undertaking voyages of discovery, and for other literary purposes, in various parts and directions, our nation seems to owe it to its own interest to explore this continent, and so directly traversing our own part of it. The interests of commerce place the principal object within the constitutional power of Congress, and that it should incidentally advance geographical knowledge of our own continent cannot but be an additional gratification."

When the expedition was under way, the James and Thomas Lamb brothers issued instructions to one of their captains that,

should he meet with Lewis or any member of his expedition on the Pacific, he was to give him all the aid and comfort at his command.

In Salem the Marine Society was organized, and men began bringing back not only nautical information that would help the next fellow on the same sea, but curiosities that would enlighten those who stayed at home, and the Peabody Museum, one of the finest of its kind in the country, was established. Nevertheless, these were haphazard and accidental, and lacked the continuity of purpose which the missionary movement supplied. Upon no other source, at the time, could one have relied for information of the cultural status of the peoples of the Pacific and the East more than upon the missionaries. While their reports were essentially one sided, nevertheless, with all their fanatical disgust at the practices of these distant peoples, they became the importers of religious, social, and political cargoes and laid the foundation for a more exact scientific understanding of world problems and the basis of literary work at home. Slowly the crude, mythical notion of what constitutes the character of Chinese life, the monstrosities that paraded as information, the disdain for the conservatism of the heathen because he refuses to change his conceptions of right and wrong more readily than the white man, these things gave way by a process of absorption. For the white man, in trying to convert the heathen, comes back himself half a convert. Two years before the first missionaries set out for Hawaii, Jackson Kelley, the Massachusetts schoolmaster, conceived the idea of founding a new republic of civil and religious freedom on the Northwest coast. The economic foundation of this new republic was the "promotion of trade with the East Indies" and wresting that trade from naughty England, which, by a "bold and lawless spirit of enterprise," had set out to do the identical thing that Kelley wanted to do—make its position on the Pacific impregnable.

And so, after centuries of exile from the lands of the original Vikings the Puritans planted themselves on the barren dunes and inhospitable shores of New England and there began to

extend their fisheries into the farthest reaches of the newly opened world. Settlement had barely reached the point of comfort and intellectual awakening, owing to the wooing warmth of the Far East, when up jumped the restless spirit again. On the rationalized basis of civil and religious freedom—which is simply another term for philosophical anarchism—they picked themselves out another “shelter from the storm, a perch on which they build their eyrie and hide their young, while they skim the surface and hunt in the deep.”

## 5

With all their kinship with the Vikings and their ardent reverence for the Bible, the first thing that astounds us is that early American literature was virtually unaffected by either. Here was a far-flung enterprise that led these sea-folk into realms the like of which in miniature had created an undying literature centuries ago, yet not only did it not find living expression at the time in poetry, but it was not appreciated when it appeared in novel form. It was not that American literature was struggling against Puritanism, but it was rather that Puritanism was struggling with Anglo-Saxonism. Had it not been for that early miscegenation in England, against which the Puritans rebelled when they moved over here, there might have been a really great literature in America to-day. But every son of an immigrant from England forthwith became homesick for those little islands above Europe and began to tell everybody how badly he felt. Even Bronson Alcott, who had been so radical that he was forced to give up his school at Boston and turn to philosophy at Concord, wept quarts in his nostalgia. “When I speak of the New English,” he said, “how can I forget the departure from their old abbeys, green fields and populated wheatlands for this sour fish skin?” Longfellow, with his passion for naturalizing every sprout of European thought and poetry, had, within timid limits, a certain venturesomeness and genuine cosmopolitanism; but like all the rest, he borrowed all his images and figures of speech from Europe, brought over all the idols of the lands his folk had for-

saken, and worshipped them with that devotion with which every exile keeps fresh the memories of his homeland. And it was in that way that most of the early New England writers lost touch with their own time and failed of their great opportunity. They did not concern themselves with the growth of the continent. They were not in harmony with the spirit of democracy that was strutting swashbuckler-like across the mountains and the prairies. They totally ignored the stirring adventures that carried virile men into the great watery wastes of the world—but instead they hankered after the culture and refinements of Europe which, being indigenous there, had actually created beauty.

And so these ardent spirits of Boston, witnessing the constant voyaging that went on about them, themselves went in search of some intellectual cargoes, though they were, at best, only busy little packet boats plying regularly between Europe and Boston, making port only in England, Spain, and Italy. And so completely influenced were the critics and the anthologists by these writers, that some of the poetry that comes nearest being genuine has been left out entirely from their sacred *analecta*. Just as Longfellow “turned back to Greece” and Lowell “found himself dipping up the vernacular to water the stale wine of his library,” so the critics passed by strange influences as being hardly worth the trouble to trace to their origins; they took it for granted that the poet got his inspiration from England.

Take, for instance, the introduction of Richard Henry Stoddard to Poe’s works. Stoddard worries considerably about Poe’s ancestry. He goes back a thousand years or more to detect Italian origin, tracing him to England and then to America. And yet, when it comes to Poe’s “Tamerlane,” he says: “How the young poet came to select this grim old Tartar conqueror for a hero can only be conjectured.” Of course, he gives Byron credit for the idea. Now, the fact that the poem is said to have been written in 1821 or 1822, when Poe was about twelve years old, and that he might possibly have heard in Baltimore (which also went considerably to the East in

trade) of one Timour the lame, doesn't at all occur to Stoddard. The fact is that it is hardly likely that any but some such direct contact with India would have given Poe the phrase "And oft, like Timour the lame Tartar." There is another hint of an explanation. In the same book Stoddard included a humorous sketch of Poe's in which he tells of an imaginary trip in a balloon, dating it 2848. The sketch is credited to a Pundit, who gives him the details of making silk, and quotes the "profound observations of the Hindoo Aries Tottle." In the balloon, Poe and the Pundit pass over New York. Pundit reminds him that once there were buildings there twenty stories high. Besides the monomania for rearing skyscrapers, they were, we are told, given to building churches which Poe calls "A kind of pagoda instituted for the worship of two idols that went by the names of Wealth and Fashion," and that the "Emperor's garden covers the whole island." Those thousand years have obliterated all this. "Nearly all that we have hitherto known of them is, that they were a portion of the Knickerbocker tribe of savages infesting the continent at its first discovery by Recorder Rider, a Knight of the Golden Fleece." Yet Stoddard missed this hint entirely. How this tendency to take for granted that our poets went to England for their themes obsessed the critics we shall have occasion to point out two or three times again in the course of these chapters but we are here concerned with extracting a suggestion here and a quotation there to indicate that had not American poets been so much enslaved to Europe we might surely have created a century ago a literature that is only now beginning to hold up its head.

So much were the writers engrossed in Europe that even Bayard Taylor, who perhaps more than the other early poets, had from close personal experience through travel in the Orient a well of his own to dip from, chose rather to borrow his images and symbols than create his own. That he had caught the gleam he assures us—though he had chosen the sensuous Near Eastern Turk instead of the mystic Far East—the true Orient—where he had also journeyed.

I found, among these children of the Sun,  
 The cypher of my nature,—the release  
 Of baffled powers, which else had never won  
 That free fulfilment, whose reward is peace.

But then he admits the futility of trying to make his fellow countrymen understand.

Go, therefore, Songs!—which in the East were born,  
 And drew your nurture—from your sire's control.  
 Haply to wander through the West forlorn,  
 Or find a shelter in some Orient soul.

How truly he had prophesied was oddly illustrated in the library of a friend of ours, who possessed all of Taylor's travels except those in India, China, and Japan; Taylor who had had that greatest of all opportunities—that of being on Admiral Perry's flagship when he opened Japan to the world. Yet in the margin of one of Taylor's books, this friend, a Greek scholar and dramatist, had written in pencil: "Oriental songs and tales come perhaps through Goethe to Taylor."

Yet Taylor was more enamoured of the East and the sea than were most of his contemporaries. Almost any crude sailor chantey has more honesty and fire than have some of the most exalted attempts of Longfellow and Holmes to ennoble that sea-faring life with which they were not in sympathy. They had missed their early opportunity, and in their old age tried to regain it. But how maudlin and feminine is Longfellow's attempt in retrospect to tell us what he saw in youth.

I remember the black wharves and the ships,  
 And the sea-tides tossing free;  
 And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
 And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
 And the magic of the sea.

What a grandmotherly little rhapsody is this! So too, Holmes, in a poem commemorating Long Wharf in 1873, almost blasphemes when he says:

We drink to thy past and thy future to-day,  
 Strong right arm of Boston, stretched out o'er the bay.  
 May the winds waft the wealth of all nations to thee,  
 And thy dividends flow like the waves of the sea!

When Holmes did become serious and struggled for a higher note, he said:

They rubbed his wasted limbs with sulphurous oil  
Oozed from the far-off Orient's heated soil.

or, "To thee the dewdrops of the Orient cling." One wonders why they didn't go down and talk to a few of the many sailors they saw coming in from the East and steal a phrase from them. They might have become immortal. Instead we have a balladry that is a take-off of the time; burlesque is in itself a worthy field, but they did not fully utilize that either. Take the "Ballad of the Boston Tea-Party"—a bit of jingling jazz:

That might, instead of best Bohea,  
Condemned to milk and water . . .  
Our old North-Enders in their spray  
Still taste a Hyson flavour.

Holmes, like most New Englanders, had little respect for the struggling pioneer or the Viking sea-dog. He could look across the hemisphere and declare that "From eastern rock to sunset wave, the Continent is ours." But how it was won, that was too plebeian for his pen. When, in 1872, a Japanese Embassy arrived, Holmes, utterly belittling the consequences of this new influence in the world, again jazzed it up. "You may build your own altar wherever you will," he assured them, not even proving a short-sighted prophet; and instead of giving us at least a good simple picture of either the humour or the import of the occasion, he drags in a bit of local election tosh:

There's a bit of a row,  
When we chose our Tycoon, and especially now.

He does finally struggle to a little precipice of verse, in:

The Eagle was always the friend of the Sun.

It is curious to observe that when, four years previously, he had also attempted to record in verse the visit of the Chinese Mission under Anson Burlingame, he was infinitely more sober. Something of the significance of the meeting of the oldest and

the newest nation in the world touched him. Doubtless, the longer contact with China had impressed men's minds with its dignity as that with Japan had not done.

Looking from thy turrets gray  
 Thou hast seen the world's decay—  
 Egypt drowning in her sands,—  
 Athens rent by robbers' hands,—  
 Looking from thy turrets gray  
 Still we see thee. Where are they?

But its symbolism is forced, and its emotions are strained, and we can see no historical perspective or prophetic vision that a great poet should have distilled from the occasion. We shall see with what accuracy and clarity Walt Whitman handled the same event in the course of a page or two. The trouble with these early poets is that they were English not American poets. They spoke of the primrose by the river's brim to a people by whose brooks grew only arbutus.

We find this so frequent when even to-day American poets attempt to write verses on Oriental themes. They call a thing a "Japanese Lullaby" and sing "Sleep, Little Pigeon" as though that made it Japanese. They throw in a "pagoda spire" and the "Sepoy's distant drum," wooing the East with crooning metaphors. Stedman tries to immortalize the Discoverer, and stumbles along this way:

And yet I dare aver  
 He is a brave discoverer  
 Of climes his elders do not know.  
 He has more learning than appears  
 On the scroll of twice three thousand years,  
 More than in the groves is taught,  
 Or from furthest Indies brought!

I don't believe you, is all that one can say to that. Yet, who can read the "Wanderer's Song" and not be convinced?

Here and there one runs across an unknown poet's song and feels he knew the East, as in "Sally," by John Quincy Adams, and "Watching," by Emily Judson, or "Nihil humani Alienum," by our old friend Titus Munson Coan, who died in

New York at the age of eighty-six a couple of years ago. Emily Judson had written from the mission in Rangoon, and her verse has a refreshing concreteness which lays hold of the imagination. Doctor Coan was the son of the missionary to Hawaii and was himself born in the Islands. He himself was a freethinker to his dying day. This little poem is honest; it has vision and it has feeling.

In the loud waking world I come and go,  
 And yet the two-fold gates of dreams are mine;  
 I have seen the battle-lightnings round me shine,  
 And won the stillness of Hawaiian snow;  
 The votary's sad surrender do I know;  
 Joy have I had of passion and of wine;  
 Nor shines the light of poesy less divine  
 Though science's white cressets round me glow.  
 Yet never in me are these things at feud;  
 They make one sum of rapture; in my heart  
 Their memories rise and flow, a living good;  
 All form for me a vital brotherhood;  
 From nothing human let me hold apart!

That is the voice of America which has been abroad, has looked toward other lands than those which had once been home. Not that other American poets have not sung more beautifully. We are merely looking for the influence of these early contacts in our life.

## 6

So far as American life in the Far East and our own Far West is concerned, the New England poets passed it completely by. The Knickerbocker branch, with whom Bryant may be classed, began to look westward, Bryant, in his "Thanatopsis," going so far as

Where rolls the Oregon and hears no sound  
 Save his own dashings—yet the dead are there . . .

But it was in Walt Whitman that we strike our first real note, not only of the genuine American poet, with his vision of the full continent, but of these extra-territorial inflections.

Mary Austin, in that unique and stimulating little volume, "The American Rhythm," has pointed out that the poet tends

to fall in step with the beat of the land: the man accustomed to riding horseback will strike a horseback rhythm; the rail-splitter, like Lincoln, the rail-splitter rhythm; and until the American poet frees himself from the insular rhythm of England he cannot become an American poet. "America," she says, "though it carried too long like the dried shell of a locust the shape of the derived culture of England on her back, proved no place for flourishes." Though she has not had this Eastern contact at all in mind, she has herself become imbued with it in some measure when she says that our literature, that is the true American literature, is "touched with a profound nostalgia for these happy states of reconciliation with the Allness." The stride of the true American poet, beginning with Walt Whitman, and coming down to Masters and Don Marquis, is the stride of the continental beating his way home to "the East," but singing as he journeys the song of his great wandering.

We swing right into this rhythm from the first page of "Leaves of Grass." As we stride along we hear the chanteys and feel the pulse of that world activity in most unmistakable terms. Whitman was never afraid to be inspired with his theme. He never forgets the pilot and the harpooner: the seaman is no more to him than the "comrade of California; comrade of free North-Westerners (loving their big proportions)." Whitman witnessed the arrival of the Japanese Embassy, as did Holmes, but this is his reaction:

Over the Western sea hither from Nippon come,  
 Courteous, the swart-cheek'd, two-sworded envoys,  
 Leaning back in their open barouches, bare-headed, impassive,  
 Ride to-day through Manhattan.

Here is a Broadway pageant not recorded in American histories. To Whitman America was the avenue to the streets of the world. In the words of Mrs. Austin, "America was a woman and the poet, though slightly befuddled by her effect upon him, had proved his manhood upon her."

The Yankee-clipper is under her sky-sails, she cuts the sparkle and scud, -  
 My eyes settle the land, I bend at her prow, or shout joyously from the deck.

Whitman was living in America, he was alive to America, and nothing that went on in any part of the land was without poetic value to him. In his "Passage to India" he creates a pageant of American progress with dredging machine and locomotive. But he sees America as part of the world—

Bridging the three or four thousand miles of land travel,  
Tying the Eastern to the Western sea,  
The road between Europe and Asia.

Turning now from the poets of the time and leaping the century, we come to men like Masters and Marquis, in whom we find a rarer, clearer distillation of the East. We have made but an arbitrary and casual selection of the verse of the country, looking for the more concrete evidence of an exotic influence. It is neither exhaustive nor beyond dispute, but it suggests an inquiry that is certain to open our eyes to much of the thematic import of the work of our present age. That "profound nostalgia for a reconciliation with the Allness" is so evident in many of our Western poets that its place is hardly significant unless we link it up with such primary experiences as made up the sum total of our first half century as a nation. How otherwise can we account for the recurrence of phrase and substance in a plainsman's songs—"Spoon River Anthology"? The more recent introduction of world themes, of world consciousness, accounts for it only in part, for things do not, it would seem, become part of poetic lore in the course of a current contact. That's why we quoted Lao Tze at the head of this chapter.

Seven of Masters's poems in the first Anthology express that yearning for the East. We have the Village Atheist who read the Upanishads and found that immortality was not a gift but an achievement; Willie Pennington, weakling, "made pulp in the activity of the senses"; James Garber, who knew that "none could ease the longing of the soul, the loneliness of the soul!"; "Winged Victory" won through the influence of Israel, India, and Greece; or

Thrice thirty million souls being bound together,  
In the love of larger truth.

We have Yee Bow, the Chinese who was converted from Confucius to Jesus only to have his ribs broken by the minister's son, and to die and be buried, and

Now I shall never sleep with my ancestors in Peking,  
And no children shall worship at my grave.

And then the Tennessee Claflin Shope, the laughing stock of the village because he would not accept all the local superstitions, but

. . . asserted the sovereignty of my soul.  
Before Mary Baker Eddy even got started  
With what was called science  
I had mastered the Bhagavad Gita  
And cured my soul, before Mary  
Began to cure bodies with souls—  
Peace to all worlds!

The East has penetrated our consciousness, and it has, much more than Europe, taken hold of our imagination. We are turning more and more westward for our inspiration, and the whole of our modern literature is tinged with the reverence for Asia. Amy Lowell, sitting among her books in her study at Cambridge, imagines herself in Japan beneath "wisteria clusters above the ancient entrance of a temple" and sees "a tea-clipper, tacking into the blue bay, just back from Canton," as in her mother's childhood. And an American writer, leading us into the mysteries of the Yogi philosophers, quotes Don Marquis, "to symbolize and portray the power of rhythmic Breath":

We are the shaken slaves of Breath:  
For logic leaves the race unstirred;  
But Cadence, and the vibrant word,  
Are lords of life, are lords of death.

Not facts nor reasons absolute  
May touch the crowd's composite soul,  
But rhythm, and the drum's long roll,  
The orator, the arrowy flute.

The gods mixed music with our clay. . . .  
Rune-giving Odin, Krishna, Pan,  
More in the running blood of man,  
His tidal moods they mete and sway.

We soar to Heaven on a tone,  
Or shod with magic syllables  
Glide on like shades through shadowy hells. . . .  
Breath more endures than steel or stone!

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### IS THIS THE MIDDLE KINGDOM?

IF IN the early American poets merely a thread of influence of the search for the Indies may be found, in the writers of prose the evidence is more obvious. It is interesting to observe that they who hailed from New England took a transcontinental look-out by way of the sea, while those who came from New York and the central states looked thither overland. The latter had less of the cosmic consciousness, for it seems that the more direct the contact with the Orient, the sooner was the call of the East in matters of the spirit heard. Cooper concerned himself more with the aboriginal civilization, but also made a literary journey into the Pacific by sea in his story "The Crater." Irving wrote of the attempt to found Astoria; but in choosing the life of Captain Bonneville instead of John Ledyard, as did Jared Sparks, Irving missed a better opportunity. Besides the books of a host of minor writers there remains "Two Years Before the Mast," by Dana, a pupil of Emerson's who had gone out into the Pacific in one of the Bryant & Sturgis ships. These were all directly indebted to this enterprise for their inspiration and their material.

But it was Melville, Thoreau, and Emerson more than all other prose writers, who fell entirely under the influence of the Orient, and strove to lift their minds to that height of Eastern quiescence where the confusion of a new and thriving industrial life, springing suddenly into being, could not infect them. To them the external world was tangible enough, and real, but its very exuberant reality failed to disturb the calm of their own detached contemplation. But just as the failure of America to recognize genius of the first magnitude in Melville will continue to be one of the great mysteries of our time, so will be the failure of Nathaniel Hawthorne to make use of this wealth of material

that was there pleading for his pen. How Hawthorne, the son of an East India captain, cherishing in his study at Lennox relics of his father's Indian life, let it all slip by must be placed in the category of aberration; for only his utter hatred and horror of primitive puritanism could possibly have blinded him to it. "Opposite the door you have entered," wrote Mrs. Hawthorne, "stands the centre table; on it are books, the beautiful India box and the superb India punch bowl and pitcher which Mr. Hawthorne's father had made in India for himself." At the Essex Institute of Salem one may see the Journal of his father's voyage to Bengal, inscribed with the name of the youthful Hawthorne. Yet, while he seems on several occasions to have meditated on themes suggested by these contacts and by his own long experience at the Salem Custom House, there is as little of India in his novels as there is of his own passionate and life-long love of the sea—the sea from which, by some untold fate, he had been turned—but whither? Hawthorne's picture of the Salem Custom House in the last stages of its decay as given in "The Scarlet Letter" remains, after the whole of that gorgeous commerce had slipped from it, one of the most memorable in American fiction. His want of literary interest in the East is all the more amazing because he was such a close friend of Herman Melville. Can it be that he was over-awed by Melville's greater genius in that field, his superior knowledge? But Hawthorne, as a literary man, seems hardly to have noticed Melville. The hint again comes to us that he was limited by the lure of Europe, of England, and a contempt for his own America. Hawthorne made a note for a story or an essay about "a young woman in England, poisoned by an East Indian barbed dart, which her brother had brought home, as a curiosity." But why should he have taken his young woman to England for her setting, when as spectacular a setting had come for her to him by way of Salem direct from India and China? It was the European bondage again, and Hawthorne succeeded in making himself into a great American writer—which he undoubtedly was—only by virtue of a vitriolic reaction against its puritanism. Otherwise he was himself European.

In his friend, Herman Melville, there was the exact antithesis. If there was not in his blood, there certainly was in his brain the true spirit of the Viking. The influence that is born of a vicarious experience is as nothing to that of actual contact with the outer world itself. That, Melville gained through years of roaming. In him was distilled the liquor of a living world, and to imbibe ever so little of his best writing is to be intoxicated with life. He tapped hidden wells of phrase and feeling that had been filled through innumerable generations of sea-faring. He could not have written that way out of his own heart alone. From every man on those seas he must have picked up a thought here and a word there, consciously or unconsciously. Folk-history becomes poetry only when the speech of common man has been shaped by it. This speech Melville, as no other American, has used. Yet Melville is not even mentioned in Barrett Wendell's "Literary History of America." The reason is clear. Melville belongs to the world known as the Indies. He was its outstanding product. And not till we had moved away from the material hunger for the Indies could he be understood.

Returning from his life with the cannibal Typees and from spending some time in the American Navy in the Far East, he began to tell stories, quite successfully. Then he talked of time and eternity with Hawthorne, delved with him into metaphysics in the Berkshires, and in that communion wrote "Moby Dick," the book which few gave any attention to for seventy years. How truly did Melville understand life when he said to Hawthorne: "Though I wrote the gospels in this century I should die in the gutter." He turned recluse and mystic and remained for forty years in his living tomb in New York.

"Moby Dick" is the epos of a new people—the only work of genuine epic quality produced by any people in modern times; akin to *Beowulf* and the *Nibelungenlied* and the Norse sagas more than to anything English—a voice out of the great primitive, heroic age which seems to us to lie just beyond written history.

Spiritual isolation such as Melville's was then no unusual oc-

currence. As Emerson said in his address on the American scholar: "Young men of the fairest promise, who begin life upon our shores, inflated by the mountain winds, shined upon by all the stars of God, find the earth below not in unison with these, but are hindered from action by the disgust which the principles on which business is managed inspire, and turn drudges, or die of disgust—some of them suicides." Whither, in their disgust, were they to turn? Jones Very became a recluse and mystic, Thoreau, a recluse-naturalist, Emerson a transcendentalist. They all drank at the well of Indian mysticism and, turning, led a host of varying disciples away from avaricious Europe to the East.

## 2

Emerson himself tells us that Thoreau had contempt for European manners and thought and "wished to go to Oregon, not to London" and adds that he would have been competent to lead "A Pacific Expedition." There is nothing vague or metaphysical about Thoreau; he is the naturalist even when he deals with the merchant-shipowner and the trader. Even Emerson puts his transcendental generalities aside when he talks of Thoreau. Since all who write of him are equally specific, it is not difficult to trace the sources of his conceptions. Channing tells us: "He had no favourite among modern writers save Carlyle. Stories, novels (excepting the History of Froissart and the grand old Pelion on Ossa of the Hindoo Mythology) he did not read. His East Indian studies never went deep technically; into the philological discussion as to whether *ab*, *ab*, is Sanskrit, or 'What is Om?' he entered not. But no one relished the Bhagvat Geeta better, or the good sentences from the Vishnu Purana. He loved the Laws of Manu, the Vishnu Sarma, Saadi, and similar books. After he had ceased to read these works he received a collection of them as a present, from his English friend Cholmondeley in 1855." Nor is Thoreau himself reticent. In his chapter on "Economy" he attributes great inward riches to the ancient philosophers of China and India, and regrets that "We know not much about them. It

is remarkable that *we* know so much of them as we do. The same is true of the more modern reformers and benefactors of their race."

Walden is replete with similar references. Thoreau, having heard constant talk about the conditions of strange peoples from among the merchants and the missionaries of Massachusetts, and the sailors, bethinks himself to say something too. "I would fain say something, not so much concerning the Chinese and Sandwich Islanders as you who read these pages. . . . I have travelled a good deal in Concord. . . . I have heard of Bramins [and all their strange antics]; but even these forms of conscious penance are hardly more incredible and astonishing than the scenes which I daily witness" in your own little New England. And what this naturalist travelling in Concord saw must indeed have astonished his readers. Somewhat later in the book he explicitly declares that he is going to take the China trader as the model for his own ventures in living.

"I have always endeavoured to acquire strict business habits," he says; "they are indispensable to every man. If your trade is with the Celestial Empire, then some small counting-house on the coast, in some Salem harbour, will be fixture enough. You will export such articles as the country affords, purely native products, much ice and pine timber and a little granite, always in native bottoms. These will be good ventures. To oversee all the details yourself in person; to be at once pilot and captain, and owner and underwriter; to buy and sell and keep the accounts; to read every letter received, and write or read every letter sent; to superintend the discharge of imports night and day; to be upon many parts of the coast almost at the same time,—often the richest freight will be discharged upon a Jersey shore—to be your own telegraph, unweariedly sweeping the horizon, speaking all passing vessels bound coastwise; to keep up a steady despatch of commodities, for the supply of such a distant and exorbitant market; to keep yourself informed of the state of the markets; prospects of war and peace everywhere, and anticipate the tendencies of trade and

civilization,—taking advantage of the results of all exploring expeditions, using new passages and all improvements in navigation;—charts to be studied, the position of reefs and new lights and buoys to be ascertained, and ever, and ever, the logarithmic tables to be corrected, for by the error of some calculator the vessel often splits upon a rock that should have reached a friendly pier,—there is the untold fate of *La Pérouse*;—universal science to be kept pace with, studying the lives of all great discoverers and navigators, great adventurers and merchants, from Hanno and the Phœnicians down to our day; in fine, account of stock to be taken from time to time, to know how you stand. It is a labour to task the faculties of a man,—such problems of profit and loss, of interest, of tare and tret, and gauging of all kinds in it, as demand a universal knowledge.”

At one moment Thoreau contrasts the physical condition of the Irish with that of the South Sea Islander; at another, he deplores the introduction of plush seats into railroad coaches which he saw becoming “no better than a modern drawing room, with divans, and ottomans, and sunshades, and a hundred other Oriental things, which we are taking West with us, invented for the ladies of the harem and the effeminate natives of the Celestial Empire, which Jonathan should be ashamed to know the names of.” Instead of taking these material comforts and luxuries and imitating the temples and structures of the East, “How much more admirable the Bhagvat Geeta than all the ruins of the East!” Thoreau the democrat, the naturalist wants not too much of this promising American efficiency. “There was a crazy fellow once in this town who undertook to dig through to China, and he got so far that, as he said, he heard the Chinese pots and kettles rattle; but I think that I shall not go out of my way to admire the hole which he made.” But he got his information, which he was always seeking, from more rational sources, for “Even the sailor on the Atlantic and Pacific is awakened by his [chanticleer’s] voice.” What though his own place about Walden Pond was as solitary as the prairies, it was “as much Asia or Africa as New England!” Living apart from Boston did not make him really a recluse. “My

neighbours tell me of their adventures . . . of California and Texas, of England and the Indies," but after all, "The other side of the globe is but the home of our correspondent. Our voyaging is only great-circle sailing."

And so while his countrymen were tormenting Thoreau for his idiosyncrasies and jailing him for refusing to pay his taxes, proud of their great exploits and bragging of their tremendous courage among savages, cannibals, and heathen, though too timid to live their own lives in New England—Thoreau was making of their great adventures the literature that was to perpetuate them. None other had the courage to live as he and to do this thing. How many of us, as we delight in Walden, have ever connected his philosophies with their peddling? How many of us, as we turn to Chapter XVI, "The Pond in Winter," of Walden, know that that charming reference to the ice-cutting was to the thirty-year struggle of Frederick Tudor to prove to conservative Boston that ice from Walden Pond could be carried round the world to ease the parched throats and fevered brows of Orientals in Bombay and Canton?

"Thus it appears," says Thoreau, "that the sweltering inhabitants of Charlestown and New Orleans, of Madras and Bombay and Calcutta, drink at my well. In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonical philosophy of the Bhagvat Geeta, since whose composition years of the gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seem puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions. I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo! there I meet the servant of the Brahmin, priest of Brahma and Vishnu, and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas, or dwells at the root of a tree with his crust and water jug. I meet his servant come to draw water for his master, and our buckets as it were grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges. With favouring winds it is wafted past the site of the fabulous islands of Atlantis and the Hesperides, makes the

periplus of Hanno, and, floating by Ternate and Tidore and the mouth of the Persian Gulf, melts in the tropic gales of the Indian seas, and is landed in ports of which Alexander only heard the names."

And so we discover that one of the two or three original thinkers and naturalists of America got the essence of his convictions from the China trade.

## 3

The pleasant conceit of universal knowledge which Emerson, who travelled little out of New England, affected was the result of an interest in remote and curious places which had been talked about by the home-coming seafarers of Boston. The fine air of worldly wisdom with which he flings in a reference to the Fiji Islands here, and a Chinese pagoda there, the diffuse and superficial sparkle of a cosmopolitan philosophy, his way of handing you an assortment of choice little samples of the wisdom of the ages, like the contents of a good merchant cargo made to please all markets—all these make him the spiritual incarnation of the era in which he lived. He takes the intellectual world for a province, goes here and there, with one eye on the nearest market and the other on the ports of Paradise, turning all wisdom to good account in this world and the next. And yet, again, as with Poe, Taylor, Melville—his critic-biographer also slurs the port of origin of his views. "Into the precise origin of this movement we need not inquire," says Newcomer. "Doubtless the underlying philosophical ideas are older than Plato or Buddha, and were transmitted from the Far East." And so Newcomer, a Leland Stanford man at that, who lives in a state that was one of the first to feel the influence of this traffic, takes his place with Stoddard and Wendell in ignoring the extremely important effect of so intimate a relationship as obtained when American ships were more numerous in the Far East than they were anywhere else in the world—unless it be that from the Far East they voyaged everywhere.

The trade with China coincided with the almost complete

breakdown of the old theology and cannot but have been one of its contributory causes. In one generation most of the enlightened and cultivated people of Boston had quietly moved out of the faith of their fathers and embraced Unitarianism—a religion not yet recognized as “Christian” by the Y. M. C. A. to-day. The chill rationalism of this faith swept and garnished of all emotional and religious nonsense, after the devil of Calvinism had been cast out, tempted warmer hearts and more vivid imaginations to seek some more interesting faith. “Their creed,” said Emerson, of the Puritans, “is passing away, and none arises in its room.” His offering was transcendentalism.

Emerson, who disparaged too much reading of men’s works when one should rather go direct to God, nevertheless admitted that when night comes to one’s soul, “we repair to the lamps which were kindled by their way, to guide our steps to the East again, where the dawn is.” Though he prefers the inventor, he nevertheless quotes the old adage, “He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies, must carry out the wealth of the Indies.” And so while all his utterances are charged with this self-generated electricity, he looked for a time when the scattered excerpts from all antique mysticism would be gathered by some genius and fashioned into fine apparel for the American mind. That he was himself that genius he dared hardly conceive, but he was none the less a gatherer. It mattered little to him what was the nationality of his fellow gleaners, for he got his substance from Europe without doubt; but the interesting fact is, so direct was his contact with the East that hardly an essay or a lecture fails to mention it. In the “Young American” he speaks of “public gardens,” which, “on the scale of such plantations in Europe and Asia, are now unknown to us.” Men like Sturgis and Melville must have made current stories of the public gardens of Canton. Chastising the insincerity of some of the clergy who plead for contributions for foreign missions “to furnish such poor fare as they have at home” he compares this fare to the “astronomical monuments of the Hindoos, wholly insulated from anything now extant in the life and business of the people.” He has already discovered

that the moral sentiment "dwelled always deepest in the minds of men in the devout and contemplative East," but he now adds China as well as India to that East. "Europe has always owed to Oriental genius its divine impulses." Nor is he content merely with observing the workings of those impulses in other lands. He prophesies "the hour when that supreme beauty, which ravished the souls of those Eastern men . . . shall speak in the West also." Emerson's span is always so wide, his vision always so cosmic, that it is hard to pin him down to any particular source, yet with his habit of speaking (as he himself advises in his essay on language) in allegories based upon familiar facts, one detects in even those generalizations the "now" which ties him up with the current experience of his day, with the reports of happenings in distant lands brought home by way of Boston Harbour. From the grand, the vast, the unknown, the extravagant, he precipitately returns to the homely and the simple. "The Oriental mind has always tended to this largeness. Buddhism is an expression of it." But he does not lead you farther into some esoteric deep, but explains, as one talks of the virtues of a friend who has just stepped out of the door, that "the Buddhist thanks no man, but says 'Do not flatter your benefactor, lest he pretend to have done more than he should.' And that Buddhist," he says, "is a Transcendentalist." It is this intimacy with the remote that argues for the China Trade as the vehicle wherein arrived some of his erudition.

Try as he would, however, to particularize his philosophies, Emerson lost himself in the immensity of his own vision. He is like a vast sea which is and ever will be the symbol of mystery. He asks us to look meditatively upon a river in order that we realize the "flux of all things," but the flux is rather in his own mind as he himself floats off merrily to the universal in the next sentence. He who meditates upon the river sees that all it does is rise and fall with the floods of spring and the droughts of summer, but that the sense of movement onward is only an illusion. Watch that river for an eternity and you will see it ever there, one bucket of water jellied to the other.

So too with seers, generation after generation. From the fluidity of Emerson to the fluidity of Thoreau there is some sense of motion, as from the sea to the woodland brook. Thoreau is more tangible, more accessible. He reflects every external object that he lifted to his eyes, and every influence floats on his consciousness, its nature and origin undisturbed. So in Thoreau, more than in Emerson, we find these impressions made by the commerce of the East, because of which one can say that he was more truly American than was Emerson.

## 4

In one of his Walks and Talks with Thoreau and Emerson, William Ellery Channing quotes Emerson to amplify a remark about the oars in the water "always Ganges, the Sacred River—and which cannot be desecrated or made to forget itself." While we have been absorbed by the noisy disturbance of our exiles in the Orient, the Orient has penetrated our midst and is calming our inquietude. We do not notice every accession of peace. Does the sea label and pigeonhole each separate stream that, hurrying into its oblivion, does not even keep one coral chamber sweet? No more does a growing civilization take note of every separate influence that comes to augment its emotional content. Hence we have hardly noticed all the softer tendencies that allaying our passions have won our souls.

It is easy to exaggerate, and many will at once deny that this has taken place—the self-same persons, no doubt, who are the most vociferous in their claims of achievement in a similar movement in the East, the missionaries. But it is, nevertheless, true that along with the increased fervour aroused by the missionaries there was a counter-current of enthusiasm for religious discussion that not only filled the churches, but created new sects throughout the land. The missionary movement was the direct result of the Oriental trade, but no missionary could go out and learn and return with arguments with which to convince without spreading the pollen of culture and thought in his homeland. The first English-speaking missionary to China, having been refused passage by the East India Com-

pany, was carried out by an American ship from New York, and the first American missionary—Adoniram Judson—refused entrance to India by the same company, found his centre of work in Burma. The consequent effect upon American political thought has not yet been fully evaluated. Such knowledge as the average American citizen has of the Orient has been gained chiefly from them. At any gathering interested in the discussion of foreign policies regarding the Far East, the missionaries are out in full force, often with a preponderance of emotional conviction, eloquence, and concrete personal knowledge on their side. The glow of international brotherhood which Seward was delighted to elaborate upon, of the time when hosts of Chinese will meet upon this continent and in union with ourselves carry the human race on a step in world brotherhood, while no longer the specific missionary point of view, nevertheless throws a glamour over our foreign relations that is sometimes extremely embarrassing and confusing. President Wilson, in conversation with Mr. Morgenthau, remarked that the most important diplomatic posts were those in Constantinople and Peking; and in Peking, he said, it was necessary to appoint someone who was definitely *persona grata* to the evangelical groups. These groups had their beginning more than a hundred years ago in the China trade.

At the same time, as we have seen, there came the Transcendental Movement than which there are few movements in American literature more interesting. True that it had been widespread in Europe in the personalities of Wordsworth and Coleridge, of Kant and Swedenborg, but there it did not achieve the same definiteness and vitality that it did here because, quite naturally, the roots of the older faiths were still too thick and deep. While neo-Platonism had persisted in Europe for centuries, when transplanted to America, with a fresh and immediate draft upon the Orient, it burst into vigorous bloom.

All the Transcendentalists seem to have followed much the same course in their reading. Beginning with Wordsworth and Coleridge in their most neo-Platonic moods, passing on to Goethe and to Kant, the "great Buddhist of Frankfort," they

came back to Plato, where they rested for a time with enthusiasm. From Plato they proceeded to his Orientalized disciples, especially to Plotinus, and then to Hinduism, Buddhism, and the "infinitude of the Asiatic Soul." The third volume of the *Dial* (which was edited first by Margaret Fuller and then by Emerson) began to meet the enthusiasm for Hindu philosophy among American intellectuals with translations of the Hindu scriptures. In his journal for 1845, Emerson notes that he was reading "not only in the Koran and the Akhlak-i-Jalay, but in the East Indian Scriptures." Speaking on idealism he seeks to eliminate the antagonism between mind and matter. "Some theosophists," he says, "have arrived at a certain hostility and indignation toward matter, as the Manichean and Plotinus. . . . I have no hostility to nature, but a child's love to it." It is interesting that he calls the great Neo-platonist—Plotinus—a theosophist; but in a moment he gives us our clue, for in his essay on Language, on the illusory character of matter, he says: "It is the standing problem which has exercised the wonder and study of every fine genius since the world began—from the era of the Egyptians and the Bramins, to that of Pythagoras, of Plato, of Bacon, of Leibnitz, of Swedenborg," thus linking the Brahmins to the neo-Platonists.

Of course, it would not be right to seek for the basis of Transcendentalist thought and feeling solely in literary influences. There was something in the life of all these people that made them assimilate this type of thought more than any other. And several of the group—Channing and Margaret Fuller, especially—confess to mystical experiences early in life. Margaret's *Credo*, written out for her own guidance at nineteen, is pure Buddhism. "I believe in Eternal progression. I believe in a God, a Beauty and Perfection, to which I am to strive all my life for Assimilation. From these two articles of belief I draw the rules by which I regulate my life." Margaret, like Channing and Parker, like Thoreau and Emerson and Alcott, grew up in the neighbourhood of Boston, in the hey-day of the Oriental trade, and something there was in the influence of that

little magnet for the world's goods, which touched their youth with feelings, with enthusiasms like this.

Of another and most influential outgrowth of the Transcendental movement it is difficult to speak with assurance: that is Christian Science. Mary Baker Eddy grew up in Concord, New Hampshire, and in her youth, as a member of the Congregational Church, was of course subjected to Transcendental influences. Her interpretations of Scripture in terms of mysticism seem very much like that of the neo-Platonists. When first her "Key to the Scriptures" was published to a jeering world, in 1875, the veteran Transcendentalist, Bronson Alcott, was the first to comfort her, and Wendell Phillips is reported to have said, "Had I young blood in my veins, I would help this woman." To this day Christian Science is directly interested in the Orient. The *Christian Science Monitor* publishes more Oriental news than any other daily newspaper.

Theosophy, though less potent than Christian Science, nevertheless must also be considered as part of the progeny of our liaison with Asia. Though originally a spiritualist, Madam Blavatsky, its founder, had a vague interest in neo-Platonism and Oriental thought which, when she came to America, was turned in the direction of India. In New York, she was inspired to make a systematic study of ancient mystical philosophies, the results of which she embodied in her book "Isis Unveiled." Almost immediately after she determined to leave America for ever, with Colonel Alcott, an American, and settled in India. Aside from the million-dollar establishment (doubtless more valuable now) which they maintain at Point Loma, near San Diego, in California, the Theosophists may be found everywhere in small groups throughout the country. Even that famous rationalist-preacher, Moncure D. Conway, who claimed, in his "My Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East," to have exposed Madam Blavatsky's "miracles", admits, in his very title, the influence of the home of religion upon his life. While Transcendentalism and theosophy are too exotic, too far removed from the normal sources of our thought, to have any great permanent significance, they are not to be underestimated

in their potency. In its tendency to lead us more and more to a sympathetic study of Oriental thought and back to conceptions and forms of art and living which have a permanent appeal to the soul, this "mysticism" must, nevertheless, win our ultimate respect.

The significance of American versions of neo-Platonism is the greater in our time because neo-Platonism is the confessed metaphysic, the imaginative stimulus behind our dominant psychological research. Havelock Ellis is an avowed neo-Platonist, as even the title of his recent book, "The Dance of Life," shows. But it is interesting that when he seeks a parallel in life to the ancient neo-Platonic conception of the dance, he refers in most extravagant terms to the Chinese. Freud has always been touched with neo-Platonism, and is moving, through neo-Platonism in his latest books, back to Plato himself. Jung's metaphysic is more or less neo-Platonic. These great Europeans have reached the American imagination more perhaps than any others in the century. As we write there comes the universal acclaim of another, who in Germany, at least, has for long been celebrated—Count Hermann Keyserling. In "The Travel Diary of a Philosopher" he gives us his observations of a journey to the East, and leaves us with the cheering conviction that America is the hope of the world. "The youngest and most typical Westerner, the American, is the most sincere of all human beings; this redeems his lack of culture. His potentialities are unlimited. . . . Of significance he knows little as yet. If, however, he perceives it at all, then he will find perfect expression for it, he will establish the perfect harmony between essential being and phenomena."

There are many modern examples of this tendency to link mysticism with China. Sumner Crosby, a Bostonian of many generations, is a friend of Jung's, and first introduced us to the more rational phase of Chinese philosophy through his translation of "The Road," by Lao Tze. There has been a veritable exodus from the West to the East since the war, and a similar flow of Orientals to the West. To mention but a few—Dewey, Russell, Jordan, Beard, and Tagore, Mukerji, Rabindna Nag.

The interest of the West in the East, far from having declined, seems only just to have begun. What permanent conclusions and helpful recommendations will ultimately emerge are not within the province of this book.

## 5

More important, perhaps, than the religious influences have been the social and political ideals resulting from this contact with the East.

All great migratory movements in history have involved an expansion of the social consciousness. The Roman Empire was perhaps the first conscious expression of genuine world consciousness. But in the early days of the American Republic there was no urgent drive compelling the making of the fallow continent itself: no pastoral people to exploit; no great riches to assimilate; no excess populations to distribute; no inborn prejudices to adjust and mollify. Behind the notion of manifest destiny there was, of course, a fair quota of imperialistic ambition, but it was softened in appearance at least by the notion that on this continent the Occident and the Orient would meet and share in the benign influence of freedom and democracy. In this national philosophy the developments on the Pacific Coast played no minor part. As Roosevelt said: "When we look at the far-reaching nature of the results, the questions as to what kingdom should receive the fealty of Holstein or Lorraine, or Savoy or the Dobrudscha, seem of absolutely trivial importance compared to the infinitely more momentous ones as to the future race settlement and national ownership of the then lonely and unpeopled lands of Texas, California, and Oregon."

So far as Asia was concerned, there had not, until the last decade or so of the century, been any great objection to the coming of her people. There had been very few Japanese or Chinese seen here to create any. In fact, behind much of the westward expansionist agitation, as in justification of the taking of territory, was the belief that "population could be easily acquired from China; by which the arts and peace would

at once acquire strength and influence, and make visible to the aborigines the manner in which their wants could be supplied." As a counter to such genial imperialists as Commodore Perry there were those who expressed the belief that commercial intercourse should be unselfish and friendly irrespective of all considerations of national benefit.

Even Benton, with all his political scheming, gave this idealistic impetus to westward expansion. "The inhabitants of the oldest (China) and the newest (America) the most despotic and the freest Governments, would become the neighbours, and, peradventure, the friends of each other. They have the same enemies, and by consequence, should stand together as friends. Russia and the legitimates menace Turkey, Persia, China, and Japan; they menace them for their riches and dominions; the same powers menace the two Americas for the popular forms of their governments. To my mind the proposition is clear, that eastern Asia, and the two Americas, as they have become neighbours, should become friends; that they should stand together upon a sense of common danger; and I, for one, had as lief see American ambassadors going to the Emperors of China and Japan, to the King of Persia, and even to the Grand Turk, as to see them dancing attendance upon those European legitimates who hold everything American in contempt and detestation."

It was this idealism, apart from the self-interest that actuated it and some of the inconsistent consequences resulting, it was this purely cultural contribution to a new interpretation of international life that makes of the quest for the Indies such a valuable and romantic story. It gave the colour to early American diplomacy. "The weight of its influence was also constantly lent in favour of maintenance of the independence of the countries of the Far East," says John Bassett Moore. Its success in the giving to this nation a growth and reach even to Alaska seems but a just retribution for the envy of the powers that sought to frustrate it. The Russian-American Fur Company, which sought to prevent John Ledyard from completing an altruistic adventure, later lost to America a land

which then opened its buried vaults of gold to us. And the man who was responsible for the acquisition of Alaska was one of the last of these great grasping, dreaming, imperialistic, idealistic statesmen; he was ridiculed for his visions and condemned for his actions in purchasing Alaska which was dubbed "Walrussia" and "Seward's Folly."

Not even his preoccupation with the Civil War interfered with William Seward's dream world which was to envelop the Far East. He had for years been a close student of Pacific affairs, and is alleged to have even harboured schemes for the annexation of part of China. As far back as 1852, in a speech in the Senate, Seward had pleaded for a survey of the Pacific "as we advance in the very tracks pursued by our whalers and Chinamen."

The survey, prompted by a need of combing the Pacific for lost Americans and saving vessels in those uncharted waters from further wreckage, had in it wider implications. Within it was a conscious dream of racial reunion, of the peoples of the world meeting again in that ocean after the early dissemination of human materials in the world. Seward was particularly imbued with hope of a cultural rapprochement of mankind. To Cassius M. Clay he had written: "Russia and the United States may remain good friends until, each having made a circuit of half the globe in opposite directions, they shall meet and greet each other in regions where civilization first began, and where, after so many ages, it has become now lethargic and helpless."

There were other schemes for the betterment of mankind which illustrated the contemporary inflation of the social consciousness. Beginning in geographical order with the Brook Farm experiment in New England one may follow the chain of these utopias across the country. To mention but a few—the Oneida Community in New York, the Owenites in the middle states, the Mormons in the farther West, and the Henry George Single Tax movement on the Coast—these attempts to break up the old social forms of Europe were part of this great migratory movement toward the East.

## 6

As American life expands and develops and we discover that we are no longer Europeans and that there are no precedents in Europe for our problems and necessary ways of life, are we not going to turn more and more to Asia, to continental peoples, dwellers on great plains and in rich river valleys, whose situation in so many ways resembles our own? Will not China, in particular, come to have a special interest for us? Our conditions lead us more and more to the same personal refinement of physical life which was once so characteristic of the Chinese—fine clothes and good food and houses; a peaceable, opulent life, commercial, industrial, self-sufficient, and self-satisfied. “The fundamental attitude of the Chinese towards life,” says G. Lowes Dickinson, “is and has always been, that of the most modern West, nearer to us now than to our mediæval ancestors, infinitely nearer to us than India.”

From Perera in the 16th Century to Perry in the 19th Century, China was looked upon as a land wherein only the most fortunate lived, and men hied them thither as though they were bound for Eleutheria. Perry carried that vision with him even as he sailed for the purpose of prying open Japan. He had expected, he tells us, “to behold myriads of boats, decked with gay banners, and moving with cheerful activity in all directions. His fancy had sketched a pleasing picture of beautiful floating domiciles, moored under the banks of the river, and inhabited by a hundred thousand people in variegated costume; he recalled to memory the stories of the lofty pagodas lifting roof above roof, the delightful residences expanding their spacious quarters from terrace to terrace, and the snug cottages with the picturesque bridges and the comfortable Chinaman under the shade of a willow, with nothing to do but fish, of all which we have been accustomed to read, and pictures of which served to amuse us in our childhood.”

Bertrand Russell confirms this. “The Chinese are gentle, urbane, seeking only justice and freedom. They have a civilization superior to ours in all that makes for human happiness.”

The Western traveller in the Orient never ceases to wonder at the seeming happiness and contentment of the people in the midst of squalor. There is never any ease from toil, Sundays are unknown, yet throughout the year, high and low engage, as it were, in one perpetual holiday. We have to make a ritual out of resting and pursue our tasks with the brand of Adam's sin upon our brow. But the Chinese smiles at his fate, genial, yielding, tolerant, and even quarrels with you for the fun he gets out of it. For with all our practicality and our alleged materialism, we are the most romantic and the most sentimental of people. Our religion is a struggle to escape from reality; our commerce is a scramble for security which we cling to out of fear of facing life as it is; our culture and convention are not frank admissions of the virtue of form, but an evasion of the fundamentals of natural functions and of human conduct. To the Chinese the art of saving face is a smile at human foibles; the system of "squeeze" is an admission that values are intangible; the ethics of Confucius and the worship of the Emperor, an understanding of the nature of God and of God's indifference to the petty wishes of the soul's earthly shell.

Had the Chinese not been so unromantic they would long ago have pushed out into the world and taken oceans into empire. Had Europeans and Americans been less romantic they would never have striven so untiringly for a glimpse of the gorgeous East. It was this restless seeking for an escape from the harsh realities of lands not favoured with jewels and warm weather that sent us careering around the world, and those who were more docile and remained at home spent much of their time dreaming of more exotic climes and envying those who had strayed. Down to our own day, the thinkers and scholars praise the character and the genius of the Chinese. We have chosen here to convey the wonder and delight of Marco Polo and Perera, who in the 13th and 16th centuries, respectively, visited China, not in their own words, but in the words of Havelock Ellis, because through the eyes of the "most civilized Englishman" and one of the most genuine personalities of our own time we see how immortal is the magnificence of Cathay.

In "The Dance of Life," Ellis, developing the theme that life is an art, retells the impressions of Polo, through whom "China at last took definite shape alike as a concrete fact and a marvellous dream. . . . As he describes its life, so exquisite and refined in its civilization, so humane, so peaceful, so joyous, so well ordered, so happily shared by the whole population . . . Marco Polo can think of no word to apply to it—and that again and again—but Paradise." Perera, three centuries later, in the words of Ellis again, was "astonished not only by the splendour of the lives of the Chinese on the material side, alike in the large things and small, but by their fine manners in all the ordinary course of life, the courtesy in which they seemed to him to exceed all other nations, and in the fair dealing which far surpassed that of all other Gentiles and Moors, while in the exercise of justice he found them superior even to many Christians, for they do justice to unknown strangers, which in Christendom is rare; moreover, there were hospitals in every city and no beggars were ever to be seen. It was a vision of splendour and delicacy and humanity which he might have seen, here and there, in the courts of princes in Europe, but nowhere in the West on so vast a scale as in China." And after due consideration to all the cultural elements that make up the life of China, Doctor Ellis concludes: "We may understand now how it is that in China, and in China alone among the great surviving civilizations, we find that art animates the whole of life, even its morality," whereas we Westerners have only to-day "reached the point of nervous susceptibility which enables us in some degree to comprehend the popular notion of the Oriental life."

Our interest in the art of China is more sophisticated these days, but it pays altogether too much homage to externals. We accept the Orient as the Orient accepts us, taking all that it can give us to adorn as the Orient takes all we can give to lighten the cares of life. We find bachelors living amidst teakwood tables and pictures inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and millionaires filling expensive apartments with Oriental treasures in overwhelming profusion. It is pleasing to be greeted by

dainty ladies in the trousers worn by the ladies of China, and flowing gorgeous jackets, but it is somewhat disconcerting to see the aggressive Occidental woman in that Oriental clothing. Unless we imbibe some of the spirit and the grace of the East there are only vanity and boastfulness in this adaptation. The Oriental has grown into his luxury and it has become part of his nature and his soul. No Chinese ever "brags" in his display of his possessions. The Japanese bends over backward in his restrained modesty, thereby somewhat over-emphasizing his simplicity, though he wears his frock coat with as little ease as the white woman her kimono, obi, and wooden shoes. Nevertheless, this interplay of custom and this yearning for the exotic which is intrinsically beautiful cannot but make beauty in our lives.

Only after a century or more of trial and error, of failure of the West to raise the standard of happiness of the East, failure of the West to find in a modernized East the same pleasure and poignancy which drew us to it in the centuries that have passed—only then will we learn to live in the manner of the East, with more art and less hurry and with a wholesome "contempt for the morals and principles of mechanics." Then, as Commodore Perry said, will we ourselves have become the Middle Kingdom.

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THE END

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